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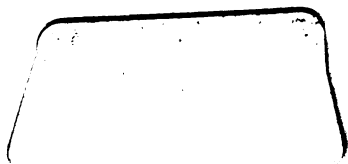
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*John Waldie*













THE  
**LETTERS**  
—  
OF A  
**SOLITARY WANDERER:**

CONTAINING  
**NARRATIVES**  
OF  
**VARIOUS DESCRIPTION.**

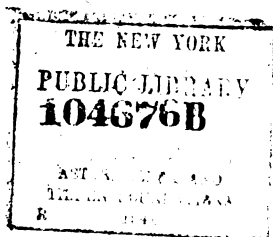
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*By* **CHARLOTTE SMITH.**  
—

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## LETTERS, &c.

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### LETTER I.

YOU have heard of some eccentric man of fortune in England, who, without giving his family or friends the least intimation of his intentions, made it a practice to disappear for some weeks, and the first letters they received from him were dated from the wilds of the American continent, or from the interior parts of Asia. As you have long been accustomed to what you call my romantic wanderings, you will not think the date of this letter very extraordinary, though it is from a country with which England is at war, and where it is sup-

posed that no Englishman would now voluntarily find himself.

You know I profess being a citizen of the world; and had it been my lot, as it has been that of some others, to be banished from that boast of its natives, where I first chanced to see the light, I should, I trust, have a greater resemblance in the way of enduring it, to one of my countrymen, than to the great Roman orator and statesman, whose behaviour during his banishment, unjustly inflicted, does so little credit to his philosophy; yet it might be imagined, that he who wrote that sublime passage, beginning *\*Cum videmus speciem primum candanemque cæli*, might have endured his misfortunes with as much dignity, and from the same considerations as the English nobleman†, who, among many subjects of consolation, so justly and

\* Tusc. i. 28, 29.

† Henry St. John Viscount Bolingbroke.

beautifully says—"Believe me, the providence of God has established such order in the world, that of all which belongs to us the least valuable parts alone can fall under the will of others; whatever is best, lies out of the reach of human power, and can neither be given nor taken away. Such is this great and beautiful work of nature, the world; such is the mind of man, which contemplates and admires that world, whereof it constitutes the noblest part; these are inseparably ours, and as long as we remain in one, we shall enjoy the other. Let us march, therefore, intrepidly wherever we are led by the course of human accidents. Whithersoever they lead us, on what coast soever we are thrown by them, we shall not find ourselves absolutely strangers; we shall meet with men and women, creatures of the same figures, endowed with the same faculties, and born under the same laws



of nature ; we shall see the same virtues and vices flowing from the same general principles, but varied in a thousand different and contrary modes, according to that infinite variety of laws and customs, which is established for the same universal end. We shall feel the same revolution of seasons ; and the same sun and moon will guide the course of our year. The azure vault, bespangled with stars, will be every where spread over our heads. There is no part of the world from whence we may not admire those planets, which roll, like ours, in different orbits round the same central sun ; from whence we may not discover an object still more stupendous, that army of fixed stars, hung up in the immense space of the universe : innumerable suns, whose beams enlighten and cherish the unknown worlds which revolve around them ; and whilst I am elevated by such contemplations as these, while my soul

is thus raised up to Heaven, it imports me little what ground I tread upon\*."

This is the author of whom Mr. Burke says, inquires "Who reads Bollingbroke?" This is the writer who is placed among those that are prohibited to the young student, and who is stigmatized as an Atheist.

But you may, perhaps, exclaim, "Yea, but all this did I know before;" and inquire how I came to have occasion, at this particular time, to declaim on the propriety of bearing with calmness a state of exile or removal from my native country. Thus then it happened:

Some days after I last wrote to you, concluding the long and eventful history of my West-India friends, I met by accident the commander of a trading vessel, then in the port of Liverpool,

\* Not having the French, I have taken this from what is certainly not an elegant, though it may be a faithful, translation; and I have changed three or four words, which appeared to me very ill placed.

and as to study the effect that different modes of life have on the human character, often amuses me, I entered into conversation with him, and found, that under a very rough exterior he had a good deal of nautical information, and some general intelligence, and appeared withal to be a very honest and humane man; for he told me, that having been two voyages to the coast of Africa, while he was yet an apprentice, he had an opportunity of engaging in it, very advantageously on his own account:—"But," said he, "I could not bear it, Sir, it made me unhappy; less profit and a clear conscience is more what suits me: so, I have now a little tight vessel, of which I am three parts owner, which trades to the Mediterranean. I am going in four or five days, with some other merchant-men, under convoy of an armed sloop, to Gibraltar, and from thence to Leghorn and Genoa." As my new acquaintance thus spoke, it suddenly

denly occurred to me that I should like to go as a passenger, having long had some curiosity to visit Gibraltar, and assuring myself I could never more agreeably gratify my inclination, as I have two friends and many acquaintance who happen now to be in garrison there, I did not long meditate on this scheme before I determined to pursue it. The accommodations on board the vessel were better than I expected; I had nothing to do but to procure a proper person to take charge home of my horses, which you know I consider as creatures that merit my affection and care, more than half the race of the animal to the class of which I belong; and having settled that point with Arnold; to his and my own satisfaction, I embarked; that faithful fellow willingly accompanying me, and we left the port of Liverpool with a fair wind on the 10th of June.

Nothing could be pleasanter than was the commencement of the voyage. It

blew a steady gale immediately down St. George's Channel, now unruffled by those gusts which often make it so hazardous to navigate. The coasts of both England and Ireland were almost continually in view. This is not the place to tell you, what were my reflections as I beheld them. At length we lost sight of the British islands, and were in the great Atlantic Ocean. As you have crossed it, I will not give you any description of the effect which this immense body of water, the great medium of communication between the new and the old world, has on the mind; nor shall I dwell very minutely on the circumstances of my own adventure, but content myself with relating, in a few words, that about eight leagues from Ushant our convoy suddenly left us; and the next day we were pursued by two French cutters, whom we could not escape by sailing, and whose attack it would have been folly to have resisted.

My

My poor friend, the captain proprietor, who saw himself so great a sufferer, was compelled to content himself with cursing very heartily both the captain of the convoying sloop and his own destiny; and having given vent to his feelings, he prepared to submit with a good grace to what was inevitable, and we were carried prisoners to Rochfort, from whence the two armed cutters had sailed only three days before.

Behold then your wandering friend endeavouring to put all his philosophy in practice; and to speculate, while he felt the effects in his own person, on the disposition of mankind to prey upon and annoy their fellow beings. I had, however, much less occasion than I imagined I should have for the exertion of the virtues of patience and acquiescence. These terrible republicans, filibustiers and buccaneers, as they were by profession, were not cruel or even insolent. I was acquainted with some of those men

who have, through the extraordinary vicissitudes of the revolution, continued still to preserve their lives without forfeiting their integrity. To these, who might I knew be heard of in the neighbourhood of Paris, I was permitted to write. Replies came in the due course of the post; and I much doubt whether, from the secretaries and commissioners under the old regime, I should have received, on such an occasion, answers so speedy or so satisfactory. My captors were directed immediately to release me and my servant with all our personal property; and I received at the same time passports, enabling me to travel without molestation through any part of France for the space of six months, and then to be allowed to pass any barrier, or take shipping at any port I might prefer. Nothing could be more calculated for my accommodation and security. Do not, however, imagine that I was selfish enough to be content with my  
own

own liberty and safety. I did not quit Rochfort, till by the same means I had used to obtain those ends, I had procured an order to the captors to accept a reasonable ransom of my friendly old commander, and to release him from his confinement, and give him his parole till he should have time to negotiate for that purpose; then, having given him an order on my banker's in London, a little to assist him through this exigence, I took leave of him, and determined, since my visit to Gibraltar was for the present suspended, to avail myself of my passport to travel through France to Germany, whither I intended to go, by way of Italy, after I had left Gibraltar.

I felt hardly sorry for this change in my plan, though it had been involuntarily made; for this powerful nation, which I have from early youth been in habits of considering under another form of government, cannot fail to present a spectacle at this period well worth



considering. Not only as the change it had undergone, and is indeed still undergoing, affected the general but the individual character of the people, hitherto marked by every thing that was most opposite to what I was now taught to expect among them.

I had long desired to see the middle provinces of France, and therefore I took the road through Poitou to the Orleansois, and intended to cross the Loire in that part of its course that lies between Saumur and Tours, of which I had heard such a description, that I had long felt a great inclination to know whether the ideas I had entertained of its beauty, and that of the surrounding country, were not beyond the truth.

But certainly it would be difficult even with more laboured descriptions than I am disposed to make, to do justice to the loveliness of the scenery in this part of France. Square patches of vineyards are very far from beautiful

on

on a plain ; but here are vines planted on hills, and shagging like copse-wood in England, high and rough acclivities, of various forms ; and often hanging over the Loire, a river of resplendent beauty, while the summits of these heights are frequently crowned by ruins of fortifications, or the towers of a convent are seen on their sides. Vineyards thus disposed are beautiful in landscape, and the Englishman most partial to his own country must, however reluctantly, acknowledge the richness and variety of this part of France — But description, however studied, and though a new language has been created for it, seldom conveys a clear idea of the place described, the materials so infinitely diversified, with which nature produces her great effects, earth, trees, and water, may be combined with the pencil, but the pen, I think, fails. A simple home landscape, a repose, or some striking and sublime scene, diversified with figures,

may

may sometimes be strikingly described; but I recollect you agreed with me that the eternal sameness of description in works of fancy, that have obtained some celebrity, fatigued you so much, that you must have desisted from reading them, even if the books had otherwise been to your taste. I therefore forbear to tell you of woods, and rocks, and towers, at least till I reach Blois, where, if I find the place at all resembling the idea I have formed of it, it will be difficult not to attempt conveying to you some of the melancholy pleasure I shall myself feel, however inadequate the medium may be, through which the communication must be made.

Bourges, August 18th.

I reached this place two days since. After an early supper, or, if you will, a dinner at an English hour, on what England does not in any plenty afford, partridges and quails, with a desert of the finest fruit in the world, I wandered  
about.

about the venerable cathedral, and then among the ruins of the fortifications and ancient buildings, many of them Roman, which are within a mile of the place. I observed a gentleman with two little girls, and a boy about eleven years old, who appeared to be like me, contemplating these monuments of ages past, yet not quite with the same design, for his purpose seemed to be to instruct his son in taking views of these objects, under the appearance they now assumed; every buttress, or rough projecting battlement, catching the glowing horizontal rays of the evening sun; while the little girls were running about to gather plants, with which they returned to their father, each trying to attract his attention by producing what they supposed to be the most uncommon of that variety with which the rocks or the fragments of ruins were luxuriantly fringed. The father was a tall good figure, and apparently about five-and-thirty; the children

dren were all handsome, but the spirited countenance of one of the little girls particularly attracted me. She and her sister approached the place where I was myself botanizing, having found here the white spleenwort\* in fructification, which though it is among our indigenous plants, and I have often searched for it, I never met with it in England. I was disposing of my acquisition so as to preserve it, till I could put it into my book; when this little charmer, after observing me for some time, came up to me, and giving me another and a better specimen of the same plant, said, in her own language, that if Monsieur loved plants, she would have the pleasure of presenting him with some she had gathered for her papa.—The grace and sweetness of the lovely little creature I should vainly attempt to describe. I expressed my gratitude, and at the same

\* *Asplenium cuta muraria*—White spleenwort, or maiden-hair.

time my unwillingness to rob her papa of the fruits of her herbalizing; but she assured me he would be pleased if I would accept them, and produced from a little wicker-basket the polypody\* of the rocks, which, though not common, I never happened to have found in fructification, and a festoon of the elegant ivy-leaved toad-flax†, of which, though I have seen it growing plentifully in England, and particularly on some of the old walls about Oxford, there are doubts whether it be a native of our island. I remember to have remarked a paling entirely covered with it at St. Cloud some years since; but I thought what this little nymph-like creature now gave me, though much of the bloom was passed, exceeded in luxuriance any specimen I had ever before seen.

\* *Polypodium frondibus subbipinnatis lanceolatis*, &c. Sp. Pl. 1550.

† *Antirrhinum Cymbalaria*. It is figured in Curtis's *Flora Londinensis*, 57.

You will believe that I was delighted with the graceful manner of the infant botanist, and thankfully accepting her present, entered into conversation with her, and was surprised at the readiness with which she told me the names in French of these and many other plants, with which her basket was filled; but by this time her father, who had been apprised by the younger girl of Emily's conversation with a stranger, came up, and apologized for his daughter's intrusion. You will suppose that I failed not to express the admiration I really felt. I found that he had retired from public life, despairing of the cause in which he had at first entered with all the zeal which a real love of his country could feel; and that, after having suffered considerably in his fortune, he had, by a peculiar felicity, or rather because he was generally beloved, been suffered to retire to a part of what remained, where, surrounded by his children (to whose mother

mother he is tenderly attached), he enjoys more happiness than he would have done had he continued in public life, whatever turn the affairs of France had taken.

It seemed as if attracted mutually towards each other, and not waiting for forms, our acquaintance was no longer of yesterday, when the day after our first meeting he gave me an invitation to his house, with an air of simple hospitality, which instantly determined me to accept it. I never saw a group of people who so immediately interested me; and, what does not always happen, I liked them better as I saw more of them. I was pleased with the manners of the parents towards each other, and towards their children. Young as the boys are, they are treated rather like beings who understand, and may be governed by, reason, than like children, who are to be bribed or terrified into knowledge and obedience.—

Without having adopted any of those



systems, which, however specious in theory, are always found defective in practice, De Vezelai is at once loved and obeyed. I inquired, in what principles he had educated his sons as to politics. "I have made them read," replied he, "and hope I have taught them to reflect on what they have read. I have carefully avoided giving them any bias, by saying to them, You are to think so and so because *I* do—This or this is *my* opinion, and *therefore* ought to be yours. I endeavour to make them honest men, and to give them sound principles of moral rectitude; and I trust, from such an education, that whatever may be the state of their country, when they shall be called into her service they will serve her with honour, however humble may be the rank assigned them."

I dined with my newly acquired friend yesterday. His house is neater, and more abounding in the lesser comforts than those I used to see in this country,

country, even in more prosperous times. The *nonchalance*, or what I ought rather to call the gay inconstancy, of the French character, which I often thought favoured too much of want of feeling, is, in the persons of De Vezelai and his wife, tempered by a sort of melancholy, arising from their recollection of the convulsions they have witnessed, and their apprehension of what is to come. I sometimes observe them looking at their children with that sort of doubting tenderness, which it is so natural to feel in reflecting on the future fate of creatures to whom we have given life—in the preservation of whose health, and in attending to whose instruction, we are constantly occupied, yet to whom we cannot secure happiness.

Some of De Vezelai's near relations emigrated at an early period of the revolution. He might have possessed himself of their considerable property almost immediately, but he took measures

to preserve it for them. One of them, who had been on political accounts his greatest enemy, made desperate by the distresses he underwent in a foreign country, suddenly appeared before him, and, even while he uttered the severest reproaches for the part he had taken, put his life into the hands of him whose conduct he professed to abhor. De Vezelai, at the hazard of his own life and the safety of his family, protected him; when his stay became too dangerous, secured his retreat; and now supplies him with money in his exile; though De Vezelai is so far from being in affluent circumstances, that his only support and resource are in his farm and vineyard, which he cultivates himself—not merely as a superintendent, but actually labouring with his own hands—while his two boys exert all their little strength to assist him. I have seen him return with his hoe on his shoulder, the boys too loaded with their working-tools, and

and perhaps a basket of the finest grapes or figs, the present of some of their fellow-labourers to their mother. I have witnessed the delicious supper that followed a day of patriarchal toil, and have compared it with the sumptuous repasts to which I was sometimes a witness in the younger part of my life, when, after the fatigue of a late debate, I have remarked the trembling hands and hollow eyes of a cabal of statesmen—countenances marked with uneasy passions, and minds evidently at work each for his own advantage :—and having made this comparison, my friend, my thoughts almost involuntarily went on, to inquire how it was, that men pursue Happiness through so much toil and fatigue, yet never overtake her, while she seems, at least in this delightful region of the earth, to smile at every cottage door, and invite the weary wanderer to come in.

The people here have often been de-  
 C 4. scribed

scribed as gay even to infantine thoughtlessness; for it amazes an Englishman that creatures so poor should be so cheerful: but he calculates as a native of a very different country, where, from the high price of the necessaries of life, to which the price of labour bears no proportion, the poor live with extreme difficulty, and are in winter particularly exposed to very great hardships; whilst here the peasant, though not better paid, has fewer wants, and those more easily supplied. However poor they may appear to us, and however inferior their cottages are to those of England, they are not without conveniences, and even luxuries. *Un bon habit de dimanche* is possessed by every member of the family. The women have little ornaments, not more costly perhaps than the long heavy cloak of our cottagers wives, but infinitely smarter and more becoming; and the most austere of their priests, when priests were the village law-

law-givers, never objected to their parishioners meeting to dance before the *Cour d'honneur* of the Seigneur, or in some other accustomed spot, after hearing mass on Sundays and holidays. Nor can I think this wrong: surely the God of mercy and goodness cannot be better praised than by cheerfulness of heart. If the whole history of man were not full of instances of folly and absurdity, one should be astonished to consider the perversion of reason, that has made him the slave of the most contemptible prejudice, and thrown a gloom over that devotion to the Creator, which can never be so warm and so sincere as when it arises from a view of beings enjoying their existence, beneath the sun which he has lit up, on the green earth so adorned with beauty and prolific of blessings. Oh! how much surely might be done, if, instead of dogmatizing, and bewildering our-

selves in the endless labyrinth of theological dispute, and destroying each other for a difference of opinion, or of country, we were to inculcate and adhere to the few simple axioms that are felt by every man to be true, and known to be those only which can contribute to content ! I think with reluctance of returning to the cold gloom and dark atmosphere of winter in London, and last night took, with undescrivable regret, my last leave of Madame de Vezelai and her children ; for her husband accompanies me part of the way. Often will this amiable family return to my remembrance, such as I saw them last night— assembled in a kind of arbour, the treillage that formed it covered with vines ; the soft air wafting the perfumes of oranges and pomegranates ; and, beneath, an extensive prospect over the course of the river. I would cherish the recollection of the picture such as  
I then

I then beheld it, and forget, if I could,  
how soon accident may, and how cer-  
tainly time will, change and deface it!  
I go to-morrow on my way to Blois.

Adieu.



## LETTER II.

DO you recollect the manner in which the very interesting little Novel called *Le Mariage de Vengeance*\* is introduced in Gil Blas? At the Château of Donna Elvira de Pinarés, where an accident occasions the lady whom he served to remain for two days, an historical picture representing a tragical event is remarked, which brings on a relation of the circumstances of the story. Not exactly like this, because it was only a portrait, but in consequence of such an incident, I became possessed of an history, which I shall relate to you ; while

\* From which was taken the tragedy of Tancred and Sigismunda.

I endeavour to convey to your imagination some idea of the places where some of the events occurred, and which I have passed three days in examining.

De Vezelai, among other remains of the splendour of the houses he inherited from a race of rich and honourable ancestors, has saved a few family portraits, which hang in his eating-parlour: among them was that of a young woman, in the costume of the age of Henry the Fourth, the expression of whose countenance I thought most singularly interesting, though it would be very difficult for me to describe it. I admired the portrait; and De Vezelai, in answer to my inquiry whom it represented, told me it was a lady whose beauty, merit, and misfortunes, had rendered her remarkable above two hundred years ago. "And you are going," said he, "in your journey to Amboise and Blois, to visit the very scenes where she was an actor and a sufferer. In consequence of my becoming  
possessed

possessed of a great number of manuscript memoirs, letters, and papers that belonged to my family, I have made out the whole story of her life; and if you have any curiosity to read it, it is much at your service. It may serve to amuse you for an evening or two, when, having seen all the town you may happen to be in has of antiquities or curiosities, you retire for the night to an inn."

You will believe that I eagerly embraced this obliging offer; and having promised De Vezelai to return it carefully by a conveyance he pointed out to me, I now hasten to translate and transcribe it, because it is easier for me to do the former, than copy the old French, in which he has purposely preserved great part of the narrative. I shall give it you in a modern dress.

---

" AMONG the few Protestant lords who escaped the horrors of the fatal night of the 24th of August, 1572, and, flying from Paris with only their lives, joined their indignant fellow-sufferers from other parts of France; and shut themselves up in Rochelle, Philibert Clarençal, Seigneur of Montrichard and Comte de Beauvilliers, was one of those who, under the appearance of fearless fortitude, concealed the deepest anguish that could torture the heart of a husband and a father.

" About three weeks before that detested night, which fixes an everlasting stain on the government under which so infamous a scene was acted, the Comte de Beauvilliers was prevailed upon, very much against his own judgment, to meet at Paris the Admiral de Coligny and other Calvinist chiefs, who had been so artfully decoyed thither under pretence of a general reconciliation

ation between the two parties, and to do honour to the nuptials of the King of Navarre, with Margaret de Valois, the sister of the King of France; a union that was to be the pledge of future good understanding and friendship between those of the old religion and the Huguenots, as the Protestants were then called.

“De Beauvilliers, in reluctantly quitting his castle and fortress of Montrichard, had left there a wife whom he passionately loved, and three children—two lovely girls, one of eleven, the other of eight years old, and a son under the age of two years; the only boy of five born to him, that had survived longer than two months. On all these children their parents doted with excessive fondness, and de Beauvilliers saw in his son the last hope of an illustrious house—the only male heir of one of the most ancient families of France.

“ Having escaped with extreme difficulty from the death intended him at  
Paris,

Paris, he fled in the disguise of a servant to Montrichard, situated in the Orleanois, three leagues from Amboise. And either the order for continuing the massacre had not been received there, or those to whom it was entrusted were not strong enough to execute it; for he found his wife and children in safety, and as he believed secure, in being surrounded by faithful servants, and dependants attached to them and to him by many benefits and universal benevolence. An armed guard was always on the alert in and about the Castle of Montrichard, and, devoted as their lords were to the Huguenot cause, their virtues appeared to have conquered the prejudice of bigotry itself, and it was imagined that even the Catholic peasantry on the domain would zealously protect their beloved Seigneur from every attempt that could have been made either against him or his family.

“ Under this impression the Count de  
Beauvilliers

34 THE SOLITARY WANDERER.

Beauvilliers yielded, though with great reluctance, to the earnest entreaties and representations of his wife, who implored him to consult the safety of those he most loved by preserving his own life.—  
'Ah! reflect,' cried she, 'on the inveterate enmity which the Queen and her party have long borne towards you! Me and my children they will spare, because we, without you, are nothing; but Beauvilliers, who can command so many hands and influence so many hearts against them, they will never cease to pursue. What defence can this Castle make, should even a small force be sent against it? And, faithful as we have reason to hope our vassals are, can we forget how much common minds are influenced by success, and how soon that fidelity may be shaken, which too probably depends only on the power we possessed to benefit those who profess it? Believe me, my lord, by your flight you will not desert, you will protect,  
your

your wife and your children, who will find their security in yours.'

"By such arguments from a wife so beloved, who had most power to persuade him, joined with those of the concierge of his Castle, and others of the people around him, whom De Beauvilliers thought most sincerely attached to him, he was at length prevailed upon to quit Montrichard, after remaining there only four-and-twenty hours. With a heart oppressed by fearful forebodings of evil, which all his reason did not enable him to subdue, De Beauvilliers took leave of the objects dearest to him on earth; and, as he crossed the last fosse that surrounded the ancient habitation of his ancestors, omens seemed to threaten from every grey and frowning battlement above, that told him he should revisit it no more.

"He arrived without discovery at Rochelle, where, when he once entered, he knew it would be very difficult, if

not



not impossible, for him to hear from his family. Alas! that family soon felt how fatal it was to be without the friend and protector, whose presence however, might not long have saved them from the horrors that fanaticism prepared for them. The Vidame de Boisdauphin, the brother of Madame de Beauvilliers, had been, like her, educated in the reformed religion; but he was of a character too haughty and ambitious to suffer that the prejudices of his youth should impede his way to riches and to honour; long since, therefore, he had declared himself the most zealous servant of the Queen Mother; and he had too little principle, and too many vices, not to become one of the most useful of her adherents.—He had long since separated himself wholly from his family, and would hardly have recollected the existence of his sister, if the present conjuncture had not offered an occasion too favourable to the gratification of his ruling passions. It

was

was by his means that, their protector being far from them, the unfortunate wife and children of De Beauvilliers were delivered up to the inhumanity of the monks of a convent adjoining to the Castle of Montrichard. The mother was torn from the children, and treated with such severity, that she survived only three weeks the rigorous methods which were used to compel her to renounce what they termed her heresy. Her son, removed from her tender vigilance, languished only a few months longer, and then followed her to the grave ; while her two daughters were, as heiresses to the house of Beauvilliers, placed by order of Catharine de Medicis, the Queen Mother, under the guardianship of their uncle the Vidame de Boisdauphin, who sent his own creatures to Montrichard, and entrusted the care of his two nieces to the abbess of the nearest monastery, the society of which were called the Ladies of St. Francis.

“ But

“ But Corisande, the eldest of the unfortunate children of De Beauvilliers, was no longer of an age to suffer this change of circumstances without feeling all its horrors. Her understanding was above her years; and her father, a man of strong sense, and of a domestic turn very unusual in persons of his rank, had taken infinite pleasure in cultivating her mind, and instructing her in the religion he had himself chosen because his reason approved it. The mother of Corisande, one of the most lovely and amiable women of her time, having lost many of her children in their infancy, was so tenderly attached to those who survived, that she hardly ever suffered them to be absent from her; and had dedicated to them those hours which others of her rank and personal beauty gave, at that dissolute period, to very different pursuits. Deprived suddenly of such parents—uncertain of the fate of her father, but too well assured that she

she had lost her mother for ever—the young but most unhappy Corisande felt, and expressed, only indignation and abhorrence towards those who had occasioned the barbarous separation; while her sister Pauline, whose little heart was agitated with sorrow, which the terror inspired by those about her obliged her to conceal, soon faded like the pale and delicate exotic exposed to the tempest of the North; and Corisande, within a year, mourned, in renewed anguish, over the loss of her relations. It was a cruel aggravation of the sufferings of the unfortunate girl, that she was not even allowed to weep in peace. The cold and hard-hearted bigots, into whose hands she had fallen, persecuted her incessantly with their exhortations to renounce the errors of her education; they blushed not to represent the miseries of her family as the visitation of Heaven, for its apostacy from the faith of its ancestors; they dared to call the evils their  
 party

party had inflicted, the acts of the God of mercy. Corisande, however, was of a disposition not likely to yield either to these arts, or those of a less inhuman yet hardly less tormenting description, when from menaces and denunciations they had recourse to cajoleries and artifice ; when they represented how much consideration she would obtain at court, if she was reclaimed from the wretched errors of her education. They flattered her beauty ; and, extolling her understanding, hinted that Heaven might have designed her for some high station in the world, and that there was none to which she might not pretend, were but the fatal impediment removed of her being an Huguenot.

“It was with astonishment these women as well as their priests perceived, that all their attempts to gain on so young a mind were repelled with a strength of reasoning which often baffled and silenced the most artful among them.—

Though

Though separated from even the domestics of her father, and denied any intercourse with whoever had belonged to him, so that she never heard his name mentioned but in the way of reproach and contumely, Corisande was still persuaded that her father lived; and, amidst the severest of her trials, she strengthened her resolution, by the firm belief, that she should one day receive, in the approbation of that beloved parent, the dearest recompense for her constancy and her sufferings.

But the Vidame of Boisdauphin, whose views were very different, determined that no repugnance on the part of his niece should prevent his pursuing them. He had so little principle, or feeling, that the life of this desolate orphan might not have been secure, had not the next male heir of De Beauvilliers been even higher in favour at the court of Charles the Ninth than he was himself; and he foresaw, that the death of his sur-

viving niece would serve only to enrich and aggrandise another, while by disposing of her in marriage, he, as her natural guardian and uncle, could form alliances highly advantageous to himself.

Corisande was now the sole heiress to the property of the noble house of Beauvilliers: for her father, if he yet lived, was proscribed; his party was declining, by the death or temporising of its leaders; and it appeared unlikely, that the Protestants could ever again retrieve their fallen fortunes. Boisdauphin, who detested his brother-in-law because he had injured him, knew, that none of the misfortunes that had yet befallen that unhappy man would be heavier to him than the knowledge that his daughter was disposed of by the direction of the Queen Mother and her creatures, whom he had so much reason to abhor.

Among the infinite number of those abuses of sovereign power which have been only gradually resisted as men have  
been

been taught to think, none now appears more hatefully and wickedly oppressive than that which left to the king the tutelage of rich orphans, and gave them the right of disposing of the heirs of noblemen whose birth or opulence could strengthen their own interest. At the period when Corisande fell into the power of her uncle, this usurped prerogative was at its height. Boisdauphin saw, that, by procuring it to be exerted in his favour, he might, through the alliance he should form for Corisande, gratify his ambition, while there was no chance of his possessing her fortune.

The wretched monarch Charles the Ninth survived the massacre of St. Bartholomew only two years. Suffering under the most dreadful disease, and distracted by the recollection of the murders which he had directed, while the cries of the wounded and dying Calvinists continually rang in his ears; he died



in agonies that would have touched with remorse, and urged to repentance, any heart but that of his mother, Catharine de Medicis.

But in the unfeminine and vindictive breast of that woman malignity never slept; and while her son was dying, she directed the execution of the brave and gallant Montgomery, who had undesignedly occasioned, in a tournament, the death of her husband, Henry the Second. Montgomery, however, was a Hugonot; which gave a greater zest to her vengeance.

In her eagerness to recall the King of Poland, she hardly attended to the funeral obsequies of that unhappy son, whom she had hastened, loaded with guilt and anguish, to the grave. Henry, who had reluctantly accepted the elective crown of Poland, which he had only disgraced while he held it, returned to reign in France, where the voluptuous

tuous gaiety and loose manners, that had obtained since the reign of Francis the First, increased amid all the miseries of a civil war. The people were impoverished, and compelled to take one side or the other for a subsistence. The Catholic Lords attached themselves to the court, that they might share its luxuries; while many of those of the Calvinist persuasion were either shut up in the strong towns they yet held, or in their own castles converted into fortresses; or they wandered about in parties, annoying the enemy as they could, sometimes adhering to and sometimes abandoning the Henry of Bourbon, King of Navarre.

The character of Henry of Valois, who succeeded his brother Charles the Ninth, appeared not wholly destitute of virtues while he was Duke of Anjou; but he was no sooner exalted to the throne of France, than these shadows of virtue disappeared entirely. Disgraced by follies that the most trifling woman would

be ashamed of, the effeminacy\* and debauchery in which he indulged himself diminished not the spirit of persecution. His mother, to whom he often gave up the reins of government, continued, both by intrigues and by the sword, to labour at the extermination of the Protestants; and, like an evil spirit, still scattered discord and death over the unhappy kingdom.

Among the numerous favourites of the king, stigmatized by the people with the name of "*les Mignons*," none was higher in favor, or seemed more likely to maintain it, than the young Marquis de Cham-pignac. His birth was superior to that of

\* I shall never forget, says the Duke de Sulli, in his Memoirs, the fantastic and extravagant equipage in which I found this monarch in his cabinet. He had a sword at his side, a Spanish silk hood hung down on his shoulders, a small cap such as collegians wear was upon his head, and a basket full of little dogs hung by a ribband about his neck.

the

most of the parasites who were disgraced by the preference of their vicious master; and, added to a considerable share of personal advantages, he possessed some of another sort, that might have raised him to favor, in a different court from that of Henry the Third. For, without the least sense of honor or honesty, he had talents for intrigue, was specious, artful and eloquent. He thought nothing unworthy of him that administered either to his insatiable avarice or his boundless ambition; and held an opinion, which unfortunately is since become too general, that he who is rich and powerful may set the censures of the world at defiance; and, divested of fear, which sometimes stands in place of conscience, may "dare do any thing because he dares."

Catharine, the Queen Mother, was perfectly aware of the truth of the Machiavelian axiom—"Divide et impera." She used therefore the pretence of religion (to which she was wholly indiffer-

ent herself\*) to excite one part of the people of France against the other. In that age, fanaticism was the most powerful engine of state. Persecution produced its usual effects; and, abhorring the treachery of their oppressors, and more and more convinced of the fallacy of tenets which could authorise such crimes, and even teach the actors of them to glory in the destruction of their fellow-citizens, the Hugonots became more devoted to the cause of reform, and every man considered himself as a martyr, ready to give his life to promote or defend it.

On the other hand, the flaming zeal of the Catholics rose in proportion to the difficulty they found in extirpating these obstinate Hugonots, who had the

\* When the Calvinist army obtained a singular advantage, and it was likely their party would finally prevail, Catharine, on being told of it, answered with perfect composure—"Eh! bien, il faudra donc prier Dieu en François."

sacrilegious presumption to deny the infallibility and sovereign power of the Roman pontiff; and the wickedness to pretend to see with their own eyes, and use their own reason, contrary to his especial mandates.

Among the court attendants, none, save the reverend ecclesiastics themselves, expressed more zeal against these innovators than the young Marquis de Champignac. By the display of this extraordinary fervour, he obtained such favour with the King's confessor, and sundry bishops and clergy of that period, that though his moral conduct was more incorrect than even the general libertinism of that dissolute court sanctioned, his illustrious master was encouraged in his predilection for him by the praises of the monks and most austere of the religious men, to whom was entrusted the care of the royal conscience; while to the Queen Mother, De Champignac appeared the most obsequious of her

servants, and she found him eminently useful in influencing the mind of her son, when his wavering and trifling temper led him, as it sometimes did, to think of measures contrary to her interest and approbation.

Thus qualified to rise, and visibly rising, in the favour of both the mother and the son, the Marquis de Champignac was the man elected by Boisdaphin for the husband of Corisande. The offer of such an alliance, and so splendid a fortune as she was likely to possess, was too dazzling to be refused; but De Champignac referred himself in the utmost humility to the King and Queen. Their majesties highly approved of the proposal, and sent an order to Boisdaphin to hasten the preparations, and complete the marriage between his niece and the Marquis as speedily as possible.

That the heiress of Beauvilliers could have a will of her own, never occurred to any of those who thus undertook to dispose

dispose of her. An orphan, or even more unhappy than an orphan, in being lost to her father while he was yet living, she had no friend to support her in any opposition. But nothing was so improbable as that she should make any; hence, whatever were the precepts she had learned from her Hugonot parents, she had now been two years under the strictest discipline, and the sin of her disobedience incessantly punished, under the direction of the Abbess and ladies of St. Francis.

From the care of that society she was, by the order of her maternal uncle, now removed, and found herself in nominal possession of the Castle of Montrichard; yet, ignorant of the cause of this change, she was still in fact a prisoner, with no other real alteration, than that, instead of being a pensioner in a convent, she was in the house which had belonged to her father, under the orders of some of the same persons who had superin-



tended her actions, and, as they believed, directed her ideas, in the monastery.

But if Corisande had cherished, during her residence there, the tenderest remembrance of her parents, and the liveliest recollection of all they had taught her, those impressions were not likely to be effaced by returning to scenes which renewed every fond recollection of the days when she was happy in their instruction and protection. There was not a room at Montrichard where their images were not ever present to her. She remembered but too well the fatal departure of her father, and still felt his last embrace. She fell into an agony of grief in seeing again the room where her mother, struggling to conceal the agonies of a breaking heart, had, in an inarticulate voice, conjured her to sustain her courage, and assured her they should meet again. The portraits of these parents, parents so justly dear to her, and those of some other

other of her immediate ancestors who had been followers of Calvin, the found defaced and mutilated. The apartments were stripped of their most valuable moveables; and Corisande, as she traversed the long galleries and ancient chambers of this once magnificent and hospitable edifice, fancied herself the heiress only of desolation and misery.

All the domestics of her father had either perished under the hands of assassins as Hugonots, or had been driven away by fear, save a Swiss porter, who being a relation of one of the monks of the neighbouring convent, and of a disposition little inclined to contend about matters of which he understood nothing, had agreed to go to mass rather than lose his life, or even his place, and lately had remained unnoticed and undisturbed.

On the return however of Corisande, all the affection recurred to his mind that he had felt for his lord, her father,  
whom

whom he had followed from Switzerland when he passed through that country on his travels. He remembered all the generosity and kindness of that excellent master, and began to wonder how it had happened that so many of his vassals had abandoned him, and, though he yet perhaps lived, had taken no means to show him their gratitude. The sight of his young and lovely daughter deeply affected this old servant. She noticed him with peculiar kindness; when she learned that Donat Bienne was the only domestic remaining about the house who had served her father; and Donat, when she spoke, imagined he heard the voice of his deceased lady, from whom he had experienced so many acts of beneficence, and who had promoted his marriage with a little Frenchwoman, one of her inferior attendants, to whom she had given money and furniture, and been god-mother to their little girl.

Donat

Donat could not help contrasting in his mind that amiable lady with the haughty and repulsive manners of the person who soon, in consequence of a new arrangement, appeared as mistress of the Castle, at least for a time, and who was in reality an indigent widow of rank, with whom Boisdauphin had been long connected, and to whom he had entrusted the task of preparing Corisande for the reception of the Marquis de Champignac. This woman was commissioned to dismiss the ladies of St. Francis; and, though a total stranger, to become the governess and directress of Corisande. From her she abruptly learned the intentions of her uncle, and understood with inexpressible astonishment and terror, that within a fortnight she was to be affianced, and within two months married, to a man whom she had never seen, and whose very name was till then unknown to her. Young as Corisande was, she was

not ignorant that such marriages were very frequent ; but that she was herself, at so early an age, to be the victim of her uncle's ambition, appeared the heaviest misfortune that could befall her. The very means her new governess, La Baronne de St. Aulaire, took to persuade her of the advantage of the brilliant fortune designed for her, served only to excite her aversion ; for it was from thence she learned that the Marquis was one of the court favourites, a persecutor of the Calvinists, and particularly devoted to the Queen Mother, from whom, even from her earliest recollection, Corisande had been taught that all the calamities of France had arisen, calamities in which her own family had been so fatally involved.— The lessons she had received in the convent had so little answered the purpose for which they were given, that her disgust, though it was necessary to conceal it, had greatly increased. The images

images of her mother, her sister, and her infant brother, had never a moment been absent from her thoughts ; and her father, who had either perished as they had done, or lived in poverty and exile, seemed to be continually near her, exhorting her to remember him, and never to give the destroyers of his family a title to his property. Of the Marquis de Champignac, therefore, she thought not merely with dislike, but abhorrence. Yet knowing too well how little she had to hope from remonstrance or entreaty with the persons in whose power she was, she tried to repress the utterance of sentiments which tortured her heart ; and to the elaborate discourses of La Baronne de St. Aulaire she answered only with coldness and indifference : but, when night released her from those painful conversations, she looked around her for some means to escape from the misery with which she was threatened, and which

which in so short a time would become irremediable.

Preparations were already making at Montrichard for the reception of the Vidame de Boisdaphin, and the young and ambitious bridegroom who was to be its future lord. All the damages occasioned by plunder and neglect were repaired: new furniture, of the most splendid kind, after the manner of those times, was sent from Paris; and so little doubt did the projectors of this union seem to entertain of its taking place, that in some of the rich arras the arms of de Champignac were interwoven in gold and colours with those of Corisande, as heiress of the house of Beauvilliers; and his motto and device\*, which were extremely ostentatious, were displayed

\* That which was afterwards taken by Fouquet, in the reign of Louis the 14th—a squirrel ascending a pine tree, and the motto, “Quæ non ascendem?”

on various parts of the ornaments. This was so far from being thought presumptuous or extraordinary, that the Baroness de St. Aulaire took the trouble to explain the meaning of this sentence, and occasion from thence to begin a very elaborate eulogium on the merits and brilliant prospects of this fortunate favourite of monarchs, and whom a monarch had named as the husband of the still more fortunate Corisande de Beauvilliers.

Corisande de Beauvilliers, however, was not dazzled by all these gaudy representations; nor was she persuaded by the eloquence of the lady: but, in proportion as she found these people were absolutely resolved to dispose of her without one inquiry whether she was or was not averse to the man they had chosen, her determination to reject him gained strength. Yet, how could she escape the toils in which destiny had entangled her? Throughout the house,  
where



where once every one was humbly solicitous to serve her father, she saw not one face that expressed compassion or affection for her. Nominally an heiress, and mistress of the domain, she was in reality a slave; and under her present circumstance she was tempted to envy every peasant girl whom she heard singing at a distance among the vineyards; and assisting the vigneron in their now commencing labours of the vintage.

Corisande, even at so early an age, had something like judgment: her mind was not indeed matured, but the impressions she had received from her father's precepts were indelible; and, aided by an understanding naturally strong and clear, these early lessons had qualified her to reject the fables of superstition, and contend with the frippery of hypocritical sophistry. Though yet a child in years, she very properly considered, that, if she was old enough  
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to make an indissoluble engagement, and to pronounce vows the most solemn and binding that can be imposed by social laws, she was certainly old enough to have a will of her own, and to act as that will directed. Corisande therefore determined, that, if her father was living, (and it was known he was so not many months before, though a report had since obtained of his death,) *he* alone was the arbiter of her fate. If he was indeed no more, she was resolved that no power, however tremendous it might be represented, should dictate to *her*, into whose hands she should give the patrimony she had inherited by so many losses, together with her freedom and herself.

To express these sentiments, however, according to the natural openness of her temper, would, she knew, be to hazard every chance of acting as they dictated. Madame de St. Aulaire had not the remotest suspicion that such a  
mere

mere child could have any opinion or choice. She had other affairs to attend to, for she was decidedly a woman of intrigue; and nothing doubting but that Corisande was just such a girl as twenty other girls who had been married without being consulted, and such as *she* was at that age herself, she saw no necessity for particular vigilance. Corisande was therefore, during many hours of the day, suffered to amuse herself as she would; the Baroness little imagining, that, far from enjoying the idea of her future consequence, and gazing with childish delight on the fineries of which she was to be mistress, the objects that occupied the time and thoughts of Corisande were, how she should communicate to her father, if he was yet alive, if not, to her father's friends, her present situation, and how she might escape from it.

Hardly a fortnight remained to make attempts, in the success or failure of which

which her happiness or misery was so deeply involved. Hour after hour the almost despairing Corisande wandered over the Castle of her ancestors, wishing rather that its ancient battlements might fall upon and crush her, than that she should there be compelled to enter into engagements from which her soul recoiled. Hour after hour she sat at one of the great windows, and, watching the autumnal clouds, and fancying they sailed towards the western coast of France, indulged the day dream that told her, her father might mark those very clouds, unconscious that they had passed over the head of his miserable and desolate daughter.

It was not however in the nature of Corisande, to waste that time in feeble and fruitless repining which might with any hope of success be dedicated to action. Her thoughts incessantly in search of the means of either hearing of the fate of the Count de Beauvilliers,  
and

and of putting herself, if he yet was alive, under his protection, she at length recollected Donat Bienne, who alone remained of her father's former servants. The manners and look of this man, in the few times she had had occasion to see him, seemed to be altogether unlike those of the people who had been placed here by the Vidame de Boisdaphin. He did not reside in the Castle, but in a lodge without the last fossé ; for it was regularly and strongly fortified, as all houses of noblemen were at that period in France. Corisande determined to speak to this man ; and that her going without the walls might not appear sudden or singular, she accustomed herself for some days to walk into the avenues of high trees which on three sides surrounded it. At last an opportunity occurred of entering the lodge where Donat resided. She began a conversation with his wife, to whom she made some trifling present ; caressed

ressed his children, and insensibly drew him into talking of past times.

“ Every thing you do, Madam,” said he, “ every thing you say, puts me in mind of my lady, the Countess:—blessed be her soul ! But *she is* blessed—she is in heaven. God grant, dear young lady, that you may be as happy with the fine young Lord they are going to give us for a master, as she was with our late Seigneur, your father ! For, never were better people ; nor, bating the loss of their little ones, that died three or four of them quite in their cradle, never, I think, were people happier ; and would have been to this hour, if it had not been for——But what signifies making lamentation over the past ?—What is, is—and——”

Donat was proceeding in this style, when Corisande, summoning all her resolution, asked him if he would convince her that the memory of his former Lord and Lady were dear to him, by

trying to obtain for her some information of her father?

The wife of Donat was out of the room at this moment, or Corifande would not have hazarded the question, having heard that her influence over her husband had prevented his acting as others had done who were of the Calvinist persuasion. The woman returned so immediately, that Donat could not reply: but Corifande thought she understood the meaning of his looks; and, leaving the lodge to walk in the avenue of lime trees, he followed her.

It was then that, putting every hope to the hazard, Corifande declared to this old servant her utter aversion to the marriage that was intended, and her determination to submit to every inconvenience rather than suffer it to be concluded. The native good sense of the man to whom she spoke, made him perceive that the persons who assumed the power of disposing of her could have

have no right to do so, founded in either reason or nature. He believed the Count himself to be still alive ; and though he had, partly through fear of the violence exercised towards Hugonots, and partly from a desire to live in peace with his wife, submitted to dissimulate, that he might continue in his humble home ; his heart, naturally upright, continually reproached him with dereliction of his benefactor, and ingratitude unworthy of one who called himself an honest man.

Every sentiment which for quietness sake he had studied to lull asleep was aroused by this direct application. The consequences were no longer present to him, and he eagerly inquired what he could do to prove his zeal and attachment.

“ I would ask you, my good Donat, to make yourself inquiries as to my father ; but my spirits shrink in dread from the knowledge, that a few days



only will decide my fate. Oh! if he does but live—if I could but be sure of it, I would fly to him—I would take shelter with him against this cruel oppression—I would joyfully share the humblest fortune.” A sudden thought then occurred to her. “Donat,” cried she, after a moment’s pause, “would it be impossible for me to reach Rochelle, where there is every reason to believe my father, if he yet lives, is now shut up? Could you not find me a dress—the dress of a peasant boy perhaps would be the most secure—in which I could escape from this prison, where I am so soon to be forced into the power of a man I do not know and cannot love?” Donat hesitated, and seemed to tremble at so hazardous an experiment. Corisande read his thoughts, and said, “Fear nothing for yourself, my friend; it never shall be known how I obtained the means of elopement. I do not ask you to accompany me in my flight; I would  
not

not risk your safety, or injure you in your situation. I will take nothing with me but a few trifles of my mother's. It is my fortune these people want; and if they find themselves possessed of that, they will be glad to believe I am lost to the world for ever. *Why*, since I am willing to resign that to them, should I be personally their victim?—Donat," added she with increased spirit, "*I never will*:—such is my abhorrence of the Marquis de Champignac, and so firm my determination never to be in his power, that I *will* escape from it, even though the grave be the only alternative. Decide therefore at once. Will you serve me?—The time *may* come when your ancient master may assist me to show my gratitude."

Donat was awed by the resolute manner of a person so young; and considering that what she required might be executed without the knowledge of his wife, and with no hazard to himself, promised to

set about it immediately. There certainly was no time to be lost, as Corisande had been informed that, before the end of the week, Messieurs de Boisdauphin and De Champignac were to arrive.

But Donat had hardly given this promise before he repented of it; not on his own account, but from the dangers which a little reflection made him perceive his young lady would be liable to in the execution of her scheme. How could a person so young, so little accustomed to fatigue, undertake a journey of above thirty leagues, through a country the seat of civil war, and crowded with soldiers of two parties, from either of whom she would be in almost equal danger, whatever appearance she might assume? The Swiss considered the project and his promise with dismay; but still the opinions which he had adopted at the earliest period of his life; his secret though undeclared

undeclared abhorrence of the Queen Mother, and his wish to serve and oblige Corisande, combined to persuade him that he ought to procure her the means of flying from her prison and her persecutors.

It was not difficult for him to provide at a neighbouring town the dress of a peasant boy ; and the next evening after their conversation, Corisande found herself supplied with all that was necessary for her disguise. Her resolution was redoubled, instead of failing, as the hour approached when she hoped to escape ; and it cost her no effort to refuse the offer Donat made of accompanying her, being well assured that the poor fellow, whose zeal was greater than his courage, dared not risk the anger of his wife, and that, far from his attendance securing her safety, it would have directed the pursuit : all, therefore, she required of him beyond the service

he had already done her was, to secure her leaving the Castle without molestation; and that he happily effected.

Corisande, a little packet tied to a walking-stick on her shoulder, and equipped like the son of a vigneron, or labourer, found herself alone at an hour of the evening when she had never been out before, unless protected by the retinue which at that period attended the families of noblemen; and, looking behind her, the Castle was no longer visible, and the footsteps of Donat no longer heard. All the dread with which the Marquis de Champignac and her uncle inspired her on one hand, and, on the other, that ardent desire she had to find her father, were hardly sufficient to support her courage. Proceeding, however, unmolested on the road, or rather path Donat had directed her, she hoped to reach before night-fall a house where he told her a woman lived, who,  
on

on believing she came from him, and was the son of some neighbouring peasant whom he had sent on a message to Amboise, would not only receive her for the night, but send a boy to conduct her on her way the next day to another person, a countryman of his, for whom he gave Corisande a letter, desiring him to assist the lad who would deliver it with the means of passing safely to Amboise.

But, of attaining the first asylum, the luckless Corisande was unhappily disappointed: either the directions given by Donat were not clear, or she misunderstood them; so that, instead of taking a path which cut across the corner of a wood, and would have brought her to an obscure hamlet, at hardly a league and a half from Montrichard, she found herself wandering further and further into an extensive forest, which, like many of those then in France, over-

shadowed twenty leagues of country. Corisande, soon bewildered among the darkening boughs, would have returned by the path through which she entered it; but her attempt to do so served only to lead her into another quarter of this extensive woodland.

The apprehension of wolves, and of bears, which infested these great woods; the dread of parties of soldiers, who, often dispersing in discontent for want of pay, lurked about, and subsisted on plunder, were almost equally terrific to the imagination of Corisande. She felt at once the danger and the impossibility of avoiding it; but, of a peculiar and strong character, this very young woman possessed, even at that moment, the power of comparing the long-continued wretchedness which awaited her should she return, (admitting that to return was still in her power), with the transient suffering of perishing by the  
ferocious

ferocious animals of the desert ; and she was able to decide, that to die would be the least evil of the two.

The idea of falling into the hands of men who lived on rapine, was, however, infinitely painful. Yet, she appeared like a village boy of eleven or twelve years old ; and such an appearance was, even at that half-civilized period, a protection. Though autumn, was already far advanced, yet in the southern provinces of France there is little to apprehend from the inclemency of the weather, and even at that season of the year, there are none of those heavy dews which fall in the more northern countries. Corisande, therefore, quite exhausted by the hopeless attempt to find her way out of the wood, sat down on the high moss-clad roots of an old beech, which formed a kind of seat : but, too uneasy to sleep, she could only recline her weary limbs against the bole of the tree, and, recommending herself



to the protection of Heaven, determined to wait with as much patience and resolution as she could the dawn of day.

It was not yet quite dark where the trees were not thick, and where many had lost their leaves, and the night was perfectly calm; scarce a leaf trembled in the light air, and neither man nor beast seemed to be abroad.

Soothed by this tranquil pause, Corisande recovered her breath and spirits: leaning her head on her hands, her arms supported by her knees, she looked steadily forward, and, after awhile, imagined she perceived that there were only a few trees between her and a more open space, and that perhaps she was already on the outskirts of the wood. She sprang forward in this hope, and found herself in an almost circular glade; for these extensive forests served higher ranks of men as hunting-grounds, and in many of them avenues and recesses were cut, for the purpose of pursuing  
and

shooting the wild boars, foxes, and wolves. Such a place, and where her father himself had often pitched his tent and directed his vassals to assemble, was that, on the long coarse grass of which Corisande now trod. But she immediately perceived what it was, and that still the trees every way surrounded her. She was about to retreat again to her mossy seat, when her eyes were attracted by an object, which appeared to move on the opposite side of the lawn. Alarmed, though without any conjecture as to what this object was, she continued to gaze on it. Sometimes it appeared stationary, and again seemed to change its position, and even to approach her. Corisande retired among the trees, but, as if fascinated, could not remove her eyes from this singular appearance. At length she thought it resembled a human being; and then, as slowly the figure approached across the open space, her doubts were removed.

removed by certainty ; and from the height and dress, as it appeared through the doubtful gloom, she believed it to be either a woman or a priest, and her fears in some degree abated.

But, to whatever description of persons this mysterious appearance belonged, Corisande had very little inclination to become to him or her an object of notice. She crept back, therefore, slowly among the trees, but still without losing sight of the object of her apprehension, which had now crossed the glade, and, coming directly towards the place where she was concealed, took possession of the seat, formed by the grotesque roots of the old beech tree, where Corisande had just before reposed. She now distinguished a tall woman, not in a peasant's dress—but that was all the increasing gloom allowed her to ascertain. That such a person should, like herself, be wandering alone in such a place, and at such an hour, seemed very

very strange. Many conjectures passed through the mind of Corisande; but she was too little acquainted with the customs of the world to form any that could satisfactorily account for so singular a circumstance; and fear being still the predominant sensation she felt, to effect a further retreat as quietly as she could was what appeared most prudent.

To do this, however, amid the perfect stillness of the night, and so near a person as watchful as herself, was not very easy; and, no sooner had she cautiously stepped on among the fallen leaves a few paces, before the person arose, and, looking around her, called, in a low voice — “Guiscard, Guiscard!” — Corisande did not answer; but the stranger had already caught a glimpse between the trees of the white *fraise* she wore, and which made at that time a part even of a peasant’s dress; and with a degree of haste that seemed

to arise partly from fear, this unknown person came up to the terrified Corisande. "Who are you?" said she. "I expect some of my people here. What are you waiting for? and to whom do you belong?"

The tone and manner in which these words were delivered, increased the astonishment of Corisande, while her apprehensions, however, were relieved. She collected, courage, therefore to answer according to the lesson she had received from Donat: "I am," said she, "the son of a peasant belonging to the domain of Montrichard; and being sent on a message to Amboise, I have lost my way in the forest, where I must wait till morning, for I have tried in vain to regain it."

The voice of Corisande convinced her to whom she spoke, that it was that of a very young person; but it seemed at the same moment that her language was not that of a peasant boy.—"Have you.

you seen any one pass this wood," inquired the stranger, "before you met me?" Corisande answered in the negative. "How far," said the former, "is it from hence to Montrichard? If you are a peasant of that neighbourhood, perhaps you could conduct me thither?"

Corisande trembled at this inquiry, and knew not what to reply. "There is no person at the Castle of Montrichard to receive you, Madam," said she: for, by the air of authority she assumed, there could be no doubt but this night wanderer was a person of some consequence. "I know it well," replied the lady: "had it been otherwise, I should have felt no inclination to go to it. Your message can be delayed: I will reward you for your trouble: conduct me thither."

Corisande recoiled in terror from the task that was thus required of her;—and who was the extraordinary being  
who,

who, with so commanding an air, thought herself authorized to demand it?

Corisande had been used herself to command, and she felt a singular and by no means a pleasant sensation in being thus considered as one whose business it was to obey. Half forgetting the assumed character, which she had not sufficiently studied, instead of expressing any degree of readiness to do as she was directed, Corisande said, "May I ask *who* it is that requires this service of me? I have no right to introduce any one to the Castle of Montrichard: if I had, it could not be one of whom I know nothing, and whom I meet under singular circumstances."

"You ask," replied the stranger in a firm yet altered tone of voice, "who it is that requires of you this service—Know then, that you speak to Margaret de Valois, Princess of France, and Queen of Navarre."

"To Margaret of Valois!" repeated Corisande;

Corisande; "to the Queen of Navarre! Is it really possible?"

"Are you yourself what you seem to be?" said the Queen: "I suspect that you are *not* a peasant boy. It is material to me to know what you are: by concealing the truth you will injure yourself, but you cannot deceive me."

Corisande had heard of this Princess, chiefly as having been married against her inclination to the King of Navarre—as being warmly attached to the Catholic religion, yet of so generous and humane a temper, that she had protected several Hugonots whom her mother and her brothers had doomed to destruction. She resolved at once to trust her with the truth of her own situation; and, without giving herself time to consider the consequences, declared, in a few respectful words, who she was, and why she had left, in such a disguise, the abode of her ancestors,



cestors, of which she was nominally the mistress; adding, that, in the persuasion her father was yet living, she had determined to attempt reaching Rochelle in order to put herself into his protection.

Margaret, however, with all her personal errors, and though her understanding was occasionally obscured by fanaticism and her integrity warped, by Italian politics, had really an elevated mind, and a generous heart. She was charmed with that spirit and resolution in a person so young; at a more advanced age, she had exerted herself in vain to avoid a marriage she detested; and, in addition to the favourable impression this circumstance gave her of the character of Corisande, she became immediately interested in her favour, on learning that it was the Marquis de Champignac from whom she was flying. Among all those of her  
brother's

brother's unworthy favourites, who had at different times disgusted and offended her, there was none so obnoxious to her as he was; and it was owing to some new dissension between her and the King her brother, which De Champignac had fomented, that she was at this time endeavouring to conceal herself at a distance from Paris. This coincidence determined her at once to espouse the cause of the young wanderer, and, however unprotected and destitute herself at that moment, to take under her care one who was, like her, persecuted and oppressed.

\* However amiable the character of Henry of Navarre, afterwards Henry the Fourth of France, (and the first King of the House of Bourbon) and however pleasing his person might be to others, Margaret had a decided dislike to him; and it is but candid to believe, that many of the irregularities of her life arose from being compelled to marry him, while her heart was devoted to the Duke of Guise.

Whoever

Whoever has read the various histories in which mention is made of this extraordinary woman, will not hesitate to say, that none of the evils Corisande was likely to encounter, was, in its probable consequences, more to be dreaded than this strange meeting. But Corisande herself, to whom the real character of the Queen was not known, and who had never contemplated her but by such mediums as the Great in every age are seen through, felt herself at once relieved from all her apprehensions. Whatever transient estrangement there might be between the various members of the royal family, Corisande imagined, that to be protected by one of them was sufficient to secure her from any constraint that her uncle wished to put upon her; and she professed, with all the native eloquence and warmth of her character, the liveliest gratitude for the generous intentions of the Queen, and the joy she should feel in being considered

considered as worthy her majesty's notice. Total darkness, however, surrounded them while they were thus in conversation. The attendant whom the Queen expected came not; and every intention of seeking the shelter of Mont-richard being given up, not only as impossible to be accomplished that night, but as likely to be fatal to them both, it became time to consider whether they should pass the night where they were, or make an attempt to seek a proper asylum. Margaret seemed to find great comfort, even in having some one to hear her while she expressed her uneasiness and anxiety that Guiscard did not appear. "What can have happened to him?" said she; "and wherefore is it that he does not keep his appointment? He could hardly miss the place to which he himself conducted me so few hours since, while he went to fetch one of my women, who was to join me at Arnibelle, where I had waited

waited for her till my stay was no longer safe there. What can possibly have become of her and of Guiscardé?" Corisande understood that Guiscardé was a page, to whom alone she had entrusted the secret of her intended flight; and the increasing solicitude with which she spoke of him as the time wore away, appeared to Corisande to be a proof of that sensibility and goodness of heart for which she had heard the Queen of Navarre so honoured and praised.

Encouraged by having so illustrious a companion in her misfortunes, the present inconvenience of passing the night, according to the French phrase, *à la belle étoile*, was a matter of little concern to Corisande; but towards what was to happen on the morrow she did not look with so much tranquillity. It was possible that, whatever were the sentiments of the Queen, her attendants, from whom she was now separated only by accident or mistake, might be con-  
nected

rested either with De Champignac or with her uncle; and, if her disguise was understood, it was but too likely that she might be betrayed into their power. This was not, however, a time to speak of fears and doubts to this new protectress; it was more necessary to endeavour to conciliate her favour, as the best defence against whatever might be attempted by the parties she had reason to fear.

Margaret soon forgot every immediate cause of alarm, and every inconvenience she experienced; save only what arose from her solicitude about her page. "Guiscard, Guiscard," was still repeated, with a degree of interest and anxiety likely to persuade Corisande, that she, who in so exalted a rank could so warmly and generously feel for one of her pages, must certainly be the kindest and most considerate mistress in the world.

This observation, and some others

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that she made in the course of the conversation, at length encouraged Corisande to speak of her apprehensions, and to entreat of the Queen that she might pass for a village boy, whom her majesty had retained as a menial servant. The day by this time dawned, and Margaret had an opportunity of distinguishing the form and features of the young wanderer, with which she seemed extremely struck. "A menial servant!" said she, smiling archly: "my dear girl, whoever sees you will easily detect the fallacy of such an assertion. No, Corisande: if to be known as a woman will be attended with all the danger you foresee, you must pass at present for my page. I know not how Guiscard will like such an associate; but certainly La Moue and Philippine cannot object to you. I shall only be afraid for the hearts of those poor girls."

Corisande was unused to be spoken to by any but domestics, who, except  
her

her own maid, had seldom presumed to hint to her the personal advantages she so eminently possessed, and the language she now heard astonished and confused her. But her illustrious companion, as the morning advanced, spoke in renewed alarm of the continued absence of Guiscard. "Whither," said she, "can he be gone? What accident can have detained him? I can hardly believe he lost his way, since he assured me that, having from his infancy been accustomed to hunt in these woods, he knew every avenue and lawn throughout their whole extent." Chagrin and anxiety then obscured the extraordinary beauty of a countenance, which, though want of rest and fatigue must have diminished some of its attractions, appeared to Corisande to be almost superhuman.

The Queen began to consult with her young protégée as to their proceedings.

"Whither can we go?" said she; "and



where are we secure? In quitting this concealment, even if hunger would permit us to stay in it, shall we not be liable to meet those whom we most wish to avoid? And if after we are gone Guiscard comes, as he promised, to conduct me to a place where La Moue and Phillipine are attending till I appear, he will never find me; and, perhaps——Hark! was not that the cry of a hound? Did I not hear the voice of a hunter?—Holy saints! it may be Guiscard, or it may be his greatest enemy——”

Corisande listened to these and other such exclamations with mingled wonder and fear; and, as she beheld the tall majestic figure of the Queen moving with so much grace in this wild wood, (for they now traversed the glade together) she could hardly help imagining that the whole scene was a dream; and she retraced all that had happened, to occasion her leaving Montrichard, to convince

convince herself she was awake and in her senses. Both her royal companion and herself became, however, more and more uneasy as noon approached; and the faintness of hunger was added to the dread of being found by some of the persons whom they both desired to avoid. The hunters had certainly been heard more than once; and now again the horn and the noise of cheering the hounds were repeated by the echos. Every moment the two wanderers expected to see the hunters, or their attendants; and, though these men might not know them, the Queen was sure her appearance would excite curiosity, which would probably lead to a discovery: yet, to retreat among the thicker shades would be useless; for those deep recesses were probably the resort of the game of which the sportsmen were in search.

After two or three short and disjointed consultations, they determined to take  
 F 3 their

their chance of escaping from this wilderness of boughs, by pursuing the most obvious path in the contrary direction to that part of the wood where they heard these voices, and, if they were once disentangled from among the trees, to ask their way to Amboise. They were neither of them destitute of money; and Margaret had imagined a story by which she supposed she might unquestioned obtain refreshments at some obscure hamlet, where the ignorant peasants would form no idea of her rank, and that she could from them procure a better disguise; for the dress she now wore, though not sumptuous, was very unsuitable to the character of a pilgrim, which she intended to assume; while Corisande was to pass as a young brother of hers, whom her parents had sent to accompany her in her pious journey. Amidst all the doubts she entertained of her safety, and the fatigue and hardship she was already exposed to,

to, the Queen, as Corisande thought, felt something like pleasure in the proposed metamorphosis, which was to reduce her for a while to a level with the humblest of her brother's subjects, and show her how those lived from whom her rank had placed her at an immeasurable distance.

Guiscard, however, amidst all these projects was never for a moment forgotten; and various were the conjectures with which Margaret amused, or rather agitated, her mind, as slowly they proceeded. The desultory dialogue, or monologue, thus carried on, as the Queen either discussed with Corisande, or murmured to herself, her fears for the safety of her page, was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of several chasseurs, who broke through the thickest of the wood, and, eager in pursuit of their game, passed on. But these were presently followed by the nobleman to whom they belonged. He

was passing as rapidly as the rest; when perceiving Margaret, who could not escape from his observation, he stopped, and, approaching her with an air which left no doubt of her being known, inquired in an accent of wonder, yet with every appearance of respect, what could have brought her majesty at such a time, without attendants, to that place?

Margaret recovered instantly from her confusion, on perceiving that the person who spoke was the Baron d'Herault, one of her friends. She gave him her hand, as an order to rise from the half-kneeling posture into which he had thrown himself, and with mingled dignity and good humour said—"Have you been so long then from Fontainebleau that you are astonished at meeting me at a distance from it?"

Corisande did not hear the answer; for the Baron, giving his horse to one of the men in attendance, walked respectfully,

respectfully, and with his hunting-cap in his hand, by the side of the Queen, who continued to speak to him in a low voice. After a little time, during which the Baron seemed to be humbly remonstrating, or rather entreating, Margaret appeared to have taken her resolution; and, turning to Corisande, "Seraphin," said she, "I am going to Chateau-brienne—do you follow me."

Corisande dared not oppose this resolution, however fatal it might eventually prove to herself. Two horses were brought. Margaret resolutely mounted one of them, and Corisande, however awkwardly, contrived to place herself on the other; and, attended by several of the hunters whom their lord had summoned, they were soon out of the wood, and the Baron d'Herault leading the way conducted them to his house.

The peasant boy, whom Margaret had represented as one she had met with

in a village and taken to attend upon her, failed not to excite some curiosity.

The Baron had at first imagined this was some new favourite; for the Queen's gallantries were well known, nor did she take much pains to conceal them: but there was something in the manner of her speaking of her page, that afterwards made him think he was mistaken; and when he looked at Corisande, he was struck with the extreme delicacy of her features and complexion. He observed her hands, and could not for a moment believe they were those of a young peasant. A conjecture instantly offered itself to his imagination—It was a woman, one probably whose beauty had attracted the notice of le beau Guiscard, a very handsome youth, who had been for some time beloved by the Queen, and she was conducting this dangerous rival from the sight of her favoured lover.

Yet, on reflection, this did not appear  
very

very probable. There were many ways in the power of the Queen by which this might have been done with more ease and security; and when Margaret began to relate her uneasiness at Guiscard's not having overtaken her the preceding night at the rendezvous he had himself pointed out, and within a short distance of which he had left her, the Baron d'Herault was convinced, that though he had not mistaken the sex of Seraphin, he had not discovered the reason why so lovely a young creature should in such a disguise be wandering in the woods with the Queen of Navarre.

Corisande now entered the offices of Chateau-brienne, crowded with domestics—some eagerly telling the extraordinary adventure that had concluded their day's hunting, others hurrying to obey the orders their lord had given for the reception of his illustrious guest. She sat down in one of the



passage rooms, nearly overcome with fatigue--yet not daring to complain, and not being likely to obtain attention if she had. The place where she now was, she believed to be very near Mosfirichard; and as she must long since have been missed, it was probable a search would be made, and she should be immediately discovered: nor was her dread of that event much less than that she felt of insult in the situation where she now found herself. The Queen had already, she feared, forgotten her: how indeed was it probable that by such a person she should be remembered? In what a light then must she appear, and to what disagreeable and even disgraceful conversation might she not be exposed!

Such were the distressing thoughts which occupied the mind of Corisande, while her personal sufferings from want of rest and food were almost insupportable,

able, when a decent oldish woman-servant approached, and, looking at her a moment with an expression of wonder, requested her to come to a more proper place.

Corisande willingly obeyed. Her conductress led her to a handsome room, near part of the house which she told her was inhabited by the female domestics of the family; and, giving her to understand that she was known to be a young woman, said she had orders from her lord to treat her in every respect as a *demoiselle*. The woman then went away to fetch some refreshments, which Corisande confessed she needed even to fainting; and having appeased her hunger, she was glad to follow the advice of her attendant, and retire to a good bed, where, in despite of the singularity of her situation, and of all her anxieties, sleep very soon befriended her.

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WITH

WITH the morning returned the consciousness of her singular and perilous situation. She had no means of judging what would be the conduct of the royal and extraordinary personage, into whose protection and power she had fallen in so strange a manner. The motives of the Queen of Navarre for her own disappearance from court were wholly unknown to Corisande; yet an intuitive sense of propriety induced her to fear that something must be wrong when a woman of her rank appeared in a situation so unusual, and exposed herself to meet such adventures as that which had occurred the preceding morning, when, through all the semblance of profound respect which the Baron d'Herault assumed, Corisande imagined she recollected a manner, a peculiar look, which, however difficult to describe, was, she thought, inconsistent with the deference and awe he ought

ought to feel towards the sister of his King.

As there was no doubt but that her sex was known, though her name might be concealed, Corisande felt an invincible repugnance to putting on again the disguise with which she had escaped from Montrichard; yet there was no alternative, and her only hope was, that she might be permitted to remain unnoticed in the chamber where she had passed the night.

The Queen of Navarre, however, was not unmindful of her young charge; and though the Baron d'Herault was not a married man, it was not found difficult in his house to equip Corisande in a complete habit fit for her; which was, at an early hour of the morning, brought to her by the same woman who had attended her the night before, together with a request that she would come down to the room where Margaret was.

Corisande, as soon as she was dressed,  
obeyed.

obeyed this order with fear and trembling, yet not doubting but that she should find the Queen alone. On being shown, however, into the ante-room, she found it crowded with pages and gentlemen in waiting, belonging to the Baron, whose looks, expressive of curiosity, and, she thought, of licentiousness, covered her with blushes. But, one of them stepping forward and opening a door, she found herself in the presence of the Queen and three or four noblemen, whose eyes were immediately fixed on her, while the protectress so recently acquired looked at her without speaking, and with an air of doubt whether the young woman before her was the rustic page of the preceding day. Margaret was too good a judge of expression, not to see that the beauty of Corisande struck every one present: but, little as she had been accustomed to see, in *her* presence, the charms of another so unequivocally acknowledged, she was too

too generous to feel on this account any abatement of her kindness. Indeed, it happened, that, among the persons who surrounded her, there was not one whose admiration Margaret had at that moment any design to engage.

The situation however of Corisande was extremely uneasy; for, though the Queen at length spoke kindly to her, and inquired, with an appearance of interest, how she found herself after her fatigue; the very question, while so many eyes were fixed on her, was extremely distressing. She knew little of the etiquette of Courts; but she comprehended, by the air and manner of those about her, that, the Queen's rank and her own being here perfectly understood, she was no longer to be considered otherwise than as among her majesty's servants; as one who was not to take a seat in her presence; though, from the little she said, it seemed as if Corisande was still to remain in her protection.

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To her, who had always been accustomed to receive from her own servants as much respect as it was now her turn to pay, (for, except during her stay with the ladies of St. Francis, she had received from every body around her only attention and homage,) such feelings were very awkward; less however from the novelty of the present scene, than from her doubts how her painful suspense was to end.

Retired from the presence of the Queen, many distressing sensations crowded on her mind: it was impossible for a moment to suppose, that, her flight from Montrichard being known, she should long be left unmolested by her uncle. The Queen Mother, who had shown so much solicitude for her marriage with De Champignac, would hardly desist from enforcing her commands, at the instance of Queen Margaret, with whom she was at variance; nor was it indeed very probable that Margaret would

would give herself much trouble on behalf of a young person whom accident only had thrown in her way, and for whom she could have no particular predilection. The little consequence her majesty seemed to attach to the secret of her flight and disguise, Corisande thought was a proof that she had nothing to expect, but to be returned into the power of her uncle, and immediately given to De Champignac.

Of both her dread was increased; for, the step she had taken to escape from their power would only urge them to treat her with less delicacy and forbearance whenever they should again resume it.

But, whatever were the apprehensions of Corisande, she had now little opportunity of explaining them—for the hours passed away, and her royal protectress seemed again to have forgotten her; while the late interview had so impressed her with ideas of the distance between  
them,



them, that she had not courage directly to apply to her and ask for a private conference.

It did not appear that she was wholly forgotten, as the woman who had before attended her brought her dinner, and towards evening a message, that the Queen was going to remove to another part of the country, her pages and women having now arrived, and that her majesty expected Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers to join them. Corisande expressed many scruples as to the clothes with which she had been furnished from the wardrobe of another, and which she was of course unwilling to take; but these remarks were ended, by an assurance that the Queen had given her commands, as to whatever related to her; and that she had only to consider herself as belonging to her majesty, on the same footing as other young ladies to whom she was now to be introduced.

To these orders, which were certainly intended

intended as proofs of that attention so generously promised her, Corisande had nothing to object; at least nothing that it was possible for her now to offer. And seeing no means of avoiding that which, though it was intended in kindness, might in the sequel produce all the consequences she dreaded, she prepared to obey.

Much time indeed was not allowed her for reflection. There seemed to be a great bustle in the house, and from the windows of her room she saw numbers of horsemen enter the court of the Castle, some of whom were certainly soldiers; but, as they wore no scarfs\*, she knew not to which party they belonged. Several litters, and such coaches as were used at that period, then appeared, around which those who seemed to be soldiers arranged themselves. At the

\* In the civil wars of France, the Catholics and adherents to the League were distinguished by white scarfs or white bands round the arm.

same moment the door of the room in which Corisande was, opened, and Monsieur d'Herault appeared at it; who, approaching her with an air of great respect, took her hand, and told her he was entrusted with the honour of conducting her to join the other ladies in attendance on the Queen of Navarre.

As she went through the apartments and passages, her disturbed spirits represented to her how little her father would approve of the situation in which she was thus involuntarily about to be placed; scarcely less odious to him would be the marriage from which she had risked so much to escape; and to that event, so dreaded and detested, the circumstances that were now occurring would in all probability lead. To these reflections were added the dislike she felt at being introduced to the Queen's attendants (all strangers to her) in her present state of mind, and disgust towards her conductor, who, as he led her, uttered  
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the most extravagant compliments. A more painful state could hardly be imagined; and when d'Herault helped her into a coach in which four other young persons were already seated, it required all her resolution to be able to return, even by a slight inclination of the head, the cold compliments which each seemed to think herself compelled to make. They then surveyed her with scrutinizing eyes, and smiled at each other. The faces of two of them she thought expressed only contemptuous indifference; that of one of the others triumph and satisfaction, as if she had heard an account of this addition to their society, which her appearance by no means answered; while the fourth, who was in Corisande's opinion the handsomest, though she had least the air of pretending to beauty, had a mild and rather dejected countenance, and spoke, when she did speak, with more gentleness and complacency than the rest,

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The carriage in which this party was placed preceded that of the Queen.—The roads soon became rugged and mountainous, and were rendered still worse by the heavy artillery which had lately passed them; for there was now an unremitted warfare between the Catholics and Calvinists. Towns were taken and retaken continually; and the women, children, and very old people, who were the only inhabitants, for every man under sixty was in arms, were at the mercy of the visitors for the time being—sometimes enduring all the horrors of a famine within their half-ruined habitations, and sometimes driven into the fields, where unmarked and unnoticed they perished by cold and hunger.

Slowly as the royal cavalcade passed, some wretched groups who dared not approach, or were driven back by the soldiers if they attempted it, were still seen, exhibiting such pictures of the horrors of war, and the sufferings of humanity,

manity, as made Corisande tremble. She remembered, that, like these unfortunate people, her only parent, if he yet lived, was a wandering exile, deploring his murdered wife, his children torn from his arms, and his house usurped by another. She remembered, that, with those who had inflicted all this on her father, his daughter now associated! This reflection, and the repeated sight of misery, for which, far from being able to remove it, she dared not even express her pity, gave to her countenance an air of deeper melancholy, and she leaned silently against the back of the coach, absorbed in her own sad thoughts, and neither heeding nor being heeded by her companions. They, however, were far from being silent. One complained of the extreme fatigue of the road, another expressed her fears of their being overturned; while Mademoiselle de Saint-val, whose opinion of herself seemed

to be the highest, and who had apparently taken the greatest dislike to Corisande, was taken up with some other contemplation than even the safety of that delicate person of which she was so fond; for, regardless of the shaking of the carriage, and the consequent discomposure of her dress, she was continually looking from the window—yet still retreated with an expression of disappointment, as if the object she hoped to see did not appear.

At length, their vehicle having been with difficulty dragged up an abrupt and rocky hill, one of the horses, before sufficiently fatigued, could not proceed. Unmerciful were the whippings by which, not only the coachman, but some of the attendants, endeavoured to force him to further exertion. The wretched animal, being quite exhausted, fell; and, as he was next the coach, the people, only by applying all their strength, prevented it from falling down a precipice, along

along the extreme edge of which the road ran.

The ladies, in great terror, were assisted to get out on the opposite side. Corisande only, who was left the last, seemed to be indifferent to the danger; and the footmen were about to shut the coach-door without regarding her, when a young man of very striking appearance, mounted on a spirited horse, rode up, and was about to speak to the ladies, three of whom surrounded him, each eager to be listened to while she recounted her fears and flutterings; but, having a glimpse of Corisande, he turned towards her, exclaiming, "Mademoiselle, I entreat you to hasten from that dangerous situation!" The footmen were then helping her out, while from fatigue, and a sort of hopeless torpor, she could assist herself very little; which the young stranger perceiving, he hastily left his horse, and, taking her in his arms, placed her on



a piece of rock a little out of the road, where the most silent and reserved of her four fellow travellers was already quietly seated.

Though this action was only such as mere humanity required, and was the impulse of the moment, it was easy to see that the three ladies, whose complaints he had not attended to, were extremely displeased; though Mademoiselle de Saintval was the only one who openly signified her displeasure.

This young lady failed not to express all the dislike with which Corisande inspired her. But the Cavalier hardly noticed her; his whole attention was now occupied by another; and he took no pains to conceal the sudden effect of beauty, which, under all the present disadvantages, was, he thought, superior to any he had ever before beheld.

The litter in which the Queen travelled was by this time arrived; and the young Cavalier, looking towards it, seemed

seemed to tear himself reluctantly away to attend on his royal mistress, to whom he appeared to be relating the danger her ladies had been exposed to. Their vehicle, which had been broken by the shock, was now as well repaired as ropes and such contrivances could repair it; and the silent Corisande followed into it her talkative companions.

Without any idea of offending, she found that they were all offended. Even she towards whom Corisande had felt the most inclination, now regarded her with a sort of cold disdain; while Mademoiselle de Saintval, ever arrogant and presuming, seemed hardly able to restrain herself to mere innuendos and sarcasms, which were so conveyed, that Corisande could not fail to understand them as being intended for her—though she knew not why the short attention of the young man should be considered as of any kind of consequence. To her

it was of none ; for, though she imagined, by the deference paid to him by the inferior attendants, and by the evident rivalry among the ladies, that he was a nobleman of high rank, her mind was so entirely engrossed by the thoughts of her father, and the most ardent wish to put herself into his protection, that no other object had the power to affect her.

Unaccustomed, both from habit and temper, to that kind of mischievous caballing which seemed to be the style of conversation among her new companions, she soon lost the unpleasant impression their rudeness had given her, in considering how she might for ever escape from them. They, on the other hand, weary of the little restraint the presence of a stranger had at first imposed, began to talk to each other with a freedom that astonished her ; and the Queen being named in a manner which, in despite of herself, excited her curiosity,

osity, she understood that the young Cavalier, whose unwished-for civility had brought on her the enmity of these damsels, was Le beau Guiscard, sometimes called Le Chevalier de St. Laurent, and the avowed favourite of the Queen of Navarre. From the manner in which the degree of favour he possessed was mentioned, Corisande, young as she was, and unpractised in even the language of the world, could not help fearing that there were, in the character of her protectress, some greater failings than she had hitherto ventured to suppose. It was now impossible for her not to listen attentively to all that passed; and it was with very uneasy sensations she thought it too plainly appeared, that Mademoiselle Saintval now shared with her royal mistress affections which Mademoiselle D'Alincourt, the languid and pensive lady, feared *she* had lost. Nothing could be so humiliating

to Corisande as the fear she saw they entertained of *her* becoming a competitor. Whatever he might be to them, *she* saw in the attention of such a man only disgrace; and all she had heard from her father of the unprincipled manners and political profligacy of the Court of Catharine de Medicis now returned to her mind—though his mention of it before *her* had always been restrained by adherence to the maxim which says, “Guard the minds of the young from the knowledge that wickedness exists.”

The daring confidence with which Mademoiselle de Saintval seemed to value herself on the partiality of Le beau Guiscard, and the avowed enmity she expressed towards Corisande, even for the transient attention he had shown her, excited at once her disgust and apprehension, while all that had passed since her meeting the Queen of Navarre raised

raised her wonder. It was impossible to account for the circumstances that had since happened. The appearance of a considerable train so soon after she had heard Margaret express such fears of being known, and the royal equipage and éclat now surrounding her, formed a strange contrast to the situation in which she had at first seen her—a fugitive and a wanderer, without shelter or security. Had Corisande known more of the history of the then \* Court, all this would have been less surprising, though the impropriety of her own situation would have been more evident.

\* Margaret de Valois left her husband Henry of Navarre soon after their marriage. Her mother, to whom all her irregularities were probably owing, sometimes fomented the differences which divided them, (though they had never loved each other,) and sometimes affected to conciliate them. Margaret, who in very early life had lost all regard to her own honour,

Already, however, it was a subject of extreme anxiety. Nothing was further from her thoughts than to become an attendant even on a Queen. To share the humblest fortune her father could be reduced to was, in her opinion, infinitely preferable; and she determined to seize the first occasion that offered to address herself to Queen Margaret, and entreat her majesty's permission to depart.

This opportunity was not likely to occur. Their journey continued till a late hour; the latter part of it was made by the light of torches carried by men on foot, - who walked before and on

honour, scrupled not to intrigue with every man she liked, though the Duke of Guise had always possessed her heart; and had she been permitted to marry him, it is but charitable to believe, that she would not have added to the list of Messalina's, by her personal depravity. She appears in other respects to have been of a good and generous character.

each

each side the cumbrous carriages, which, though change of horses had been procured, moved heavily on. It seemed as if there was to be no end of this tedious removal, since they were not yet arrived at their first stage. Whither they were going Corisande could not discover from the conversation of her fellow travellers, who, perhaps, were not themselves acquainted with it.

It was past midnight when, having crossed the small river Sauble, they arrived at La Sufe, an inconsiderable place on its banks; where, though there were no accommodations, the Queen chose to remain for the night, because Mans, which was the next town where they could be found, was at that time in possession of the Hugonots. Corisande now understood, that it was her majesty's intentions, by making a circuit of some miles the next day, to avoid its neighbourhood, and reach Alençon, where *Monsieur*, her youngest brother,



had promised, by the Chevalier de St. Laurent, to meet her, that they might unite their interest against the Queen Mother and the King of France; for, though *Monsieur* had almost always shown a singular and unmanly degree of malignity towards his sister of Navarre, and though his base and treacherous character had been long known to her, the desire that at present possessed her to repay the slights and injuries she had lately sustained from her mother and her elder brother, conquered her dislike to any communication or union of interest with the Duke of Alençon\* (now called *Monsieur* :) and Le beau Guiscard, the name by which her present

\* This was the youngest surviving son of Henry the Second by Catharine de Medicis. All historians describe his person as mean and ill-formed; while his mind was tainted with all the vices which the unhappy sons of Catharine seem to have derived from their mother. Such as he was, however, our illustrious virgin Queen encouraged his addresses.

favourite was more known than by that of St. Laurent, had, by a singular chance, found an opportunity of obtaining for her the pretence, if not the reality, of present friendship from this brother, who had before almost invariably declared himself her enemy.

Every one of the young ladies with whom Corisande had travelled had been accustomed to these excursions, and knew tolerably well how to fence against the inconveniencies they might meet on their way. But Corisande, without any such knowledge, and without those guards against cold with which they were provided, found herself deserted in the house of a poor shopkeeper, on whom two or three of the Queen's people had been quartered. But his house (having not long before been plundered by the foldiers of the League) being absolutely without furniture, except a wretched pallet bed and a wooden bench, the companions which chance

had

had assigned to Corisande soon left her, to seek better lodgings; and as she found no disposition to repose on such a bed and in such a place, she prepared herself to pass another night in melancholy contemplation on her former distresses and future prospects. The daughter of the poor man under whose roof she was, made up a fire in the wretched room assigned to her. She took such refreshment as those poor impoverished people could offer, and took it thankfully; for, after a short examination of her present situation, she was not only better satisfied, but disposed to rejoice in it—since she hoped, that, wholly forgotten by the Queen, and wilfully neglected by the attendants, she might be entirely overlooked at their departure in the morning, and left unquestioned to pursue her original intention of finding protection in the arms of her father. The humble house that sheltered her was at  
the

the extremity of the little town, and its windows looked over what had once been fields and vineyards; but the repeated ravages of parties of soldiers had given the whole country the look of a desert. Corisande, as by the pale clear light of the moon she pensively surveyed it, thought of the general desolation—then of her particular misery. She dreaded the morning that might again engage her in society for which she was totally unfit, and, in the sorrow of her heart, addressed herself to Heaven for protection, and apostrophized the spirit of her father: “Wheresoever thou art, my dear father! whether thou still remainest in poverty and persecution on earth, or art already among the blessed, oh! may I not hope that some consciousness of the fate of thy unhappy child will send thee to save her?”—Whenever Corisande thought of her father as dead, she was, at least in that tenet which relates

relates to the souls of the departed, more than half a Catholic.

Absorbed in these melancholy reflections, and almost regardless of the want of a bed, Corisande passed the night. The day faintly dawned, and she more than ever flattered herself she was forgotten.

But this hope did not last long. There was a noise without the hut. She looked from the window, and saw the light of the rising sun reflected from the glittering casque of the Chevalier de St. Laurent, whom she better knew by the name of Le beau Guiscard. His orange-coloured and \* white plumes

\* The deep yellow, or orange colour, *couleur de feu*, was that which the Queen of Navarre preferred. Her own dress, as described by Brantôme, was frequently of velvet or satin of this shade, mixed with black and white, and embroidered with jewels. Her Knights of course took it for their livery.

waved

waved in the light air of the morning, and his whole appearance impressed the idea of a young warrior armed for conquest in the field, rather than of the favourite page of a voluptuous queen.

He entered the house, and inquired eagerly for the young lady attendant on the Queen of Navarre. The daughter of the host led him to Corisande.

He approached her with an air of great respect, yet with evident embarrassment; lamented the inconvenient manner in which he feared Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers had passed the night; and assured her he had, as soon as it was in his power, sought her everywhere, in the hope of being allowed to procure her proper accommodation.

Corisande, to whom the scene of the preceding day was present, thought herself rather insulted than obliged by these professions. As she was determined not to consider herself as one of the Queen's maids, she desired to owe no  
favour

favour to one of the pages; her answer, therefore, was cold and haughty. Slightly thanking the Chevalier for the trouble he had taken, she told him, that, as her being placed near the Queen of Navarre, was only accidental, and would certainly be temporary, she had no right to expect the same attention as her majesty's ladies: that she had nothing to complain of, as far as regarded the Queen; but, feeling herself out of her place, she wished to have an opportunity given her to thank her majesty for the protection she had been pleased to afford her, and to ask her leave to pursue her original intention of returning to her father.

The beau Guiscard changed countenance when she had thus spoken. He seemed at some loss what to say; while Corisande, collecting all the resolution she could, took advantage of his silence, and proceeded:

“As you, Sir, have the honour of  
admission

admission to the Queen's presence, I entreat you to represent to her that my humble prayer is, to be suffered to remain here till I can put myself into the protection of one of my friends."

Guiscard suddenly interrupted her. "Mademoiselle has then changed her intentions? She is undoubtedly ready to obey the wishes of Monsieur de Boisdauphin, and the Marquis de Champagnac is to be the happy man on whom she bestows herself!"

"No, Sir," replied Corisande, disquieted to find this young man so well informed of her affairs — "No, Sir; that by no means follows. It is to my father that I——"

"Your father!" cried Guiscard; "your father! Alas! Mademoiselle——"

"What do you know, Sir, of my father?—Tell me, I beseech you, are you acquainted with his situation? It would be happiness, inexpressible happiness,



pinefs, to me, to be only assured he lives. Tell me but that——”

“You *doubt* it, lovely Corifande! and yet talk of putting yourself under his protection, of encountering dangers of which you are little aware, to seek—one who, perhaps, exists no longer.”

“Let me conjure you,” cried the agitated Corifande, regardless now of the increased familiarity with which he addressed her—“let me implore you, if you have pity—if you have humanity, to tell me——”

“There *may* be motives more powerful than either, which would influence me to gratify Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers with whatever information I have; but——Does she really imagine if Monsieur her father lives, that he is in a situation to receive and protect her?”

“In *any* situation I would ask his protection; in exile, in poverty, in prison!”

“And

"And could he give it, Mademoiselle, under such circumstances?"

"Oh heavens!" cried Corisande with increased animation: "could I only see him—could I but be permitted once more to receive his blessing——— Sir," added she, forgetting all the distance she had at first observed, "if you have influence with the Queen, procure me instantly an opportunity of throwing myself at her majesty's feet. I have heard that she is good and compassionate—I have found her so towards me:—it is in her power———"

"Pardon me, her majesty has no such power: and I much fear, beautiful Corisande, the moment you fly from such kindnesses as it is her inclination to show you, you will be demanded by the Vidame, whose influence with the Queen Mother you well know; while Monsieur de Champignac has even more with the King. I leave it to your admirable

mirable understanding, Mademoiselle, to tell you how far your laudable attempt to escape from them may have irritated the minds of those two noblemen. Let me entreat you, therefore, do not quit the Queen of Navarre, who, while you rely on her protection, is too generous to give you up. But," added he, seeming to recollect himself, and assuming the semblance of humble respect, "whoever are so happy as to be admitted to the presence of Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers feel a degree of enthusiasm which deprives them of all self-government, or I should not thus far have presumed, when my purpose only was——"

Corisande impatiently interrupted him: "Excuse me, Monsieur le Chevalier, it is not to such speeches as these that I can listen. You were going, I hoped, to tell me what you knew of my father. If you feel any interest in  
my

my situation, relieve me from the suspense that makes it the most intolerable: does the Count de Beauvilliers live?"

"With what delight," said Guiscarde in a mortified and dejected manner, "with what delight should I answer if I could do so satisfactorily! I *hope* your father lives—I even *believe* he does; but I must also tell you, that all I have ever heard about him makes me greatly apprehensive that he has been and is a sufferer under continued misfortunes."

"If, however, he is living," said Corisande, "I will not despair:—to be assured of that would be a consolation, whatever may be my own situation."

"Might I presume to hope for being honoured with a commission from you, I could in a very short time make myself acquainted with more particulars than I now know; but as this information can be obtained only by my communication with certain Hugonot lords,

lords, which it might cost me my life to avow, you must allow me the liberty of speaking to you sometimes apart when I have these communications to make. May I hope you will so far favour me with your confidence?"

Her earnest desire to hear of her father conquered all the objections Comander might otherwise have felt disposed to make. She blushed while she answered, "That intelligence of her father, however conveyed, would be welcome to her."

"Begin then, Mademoiselle," said he, "begin this mark of your generous condescension, by not noticing my having sought and obtained the honour of this conference. The persons sent by the Queen to conduct you to join the rest of her train will soon be here, and it is time for me to withdraw. Hope not, however, to obtain leave to quit her majesty; I know it is her intention to keep you with her; and, in leaving her,

her, you would fall into the very danger you have with courage so unprecedented nobly endeavoured to escape, a marriage with a man unworthy of you, one who, the more you knew of him, the more you must detest. Adieu, Mademoiselle. Remember the favour you have deigned to grant me: my exertions in consequence of it will be unwearied; and you may be assured that you shall very soon have information of the Count. Grant, Heaven, it may be such as may relieve your anxiety."

Then, without waiting for an answer, and with a degree of haste as if he had already outstayed his time, the Chevalier de St. Laurent withdrew, leaving Corisande surprised at his conduct, and, after a moment's reflection, not perfectly satisfied with her own.

Time, however, was denied her to consider then what had passed, for, one of the Queen's women, a person of a lower rank than those with whom she

had been associated the day before appeared, and informed her that her majesty expected her attendance.

Corisande followed this woman through two half-ruined streets to a house, which was the best in the town, where a kind of court was assembled round Margaret, who nodded kindly to Corisande when she appeared among the crowd; and, whispering to one of the gentlemen who stood near her, he came round, and handed her to the back of the Queen's chair.

Others, however, were about her majesty to whom it was necessary for her first to speak. At length she took occasion to say, in what Corisande considered as a very gracious manner—"I have been remiss towards you, Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers, but I hope to make up for my omission. Remain near me, I will give proper orders about you in future."

To express something like acknowledgment

ledgment was all Corisande could do. It was not a proper time to represent to the Queen the many discomforts by which the performance of this promise would probably be embittered.

Persons elevated as Margaret was, have no idea of ordinary life—notwithstanding she had, though yet a young woman, met with adventures which might have made her understand, that dependance on the will of another, and a total change in the modes of life, as well as to be thrown among strangers, could not fail to distress a young person under the circumstances Corisande was now ; yet, Margaret was no longer the wandering Princess of Romance who sympathized with one escaping from what she had herself vainly resisted, a compulsive marriage ; she was now the Queen of Navarre, surrounded by adulation, and the centre of a crowd of noble and military men, collected, some by one motive and some by another,



and treating her as their sovereign. These, however the presence of the greater part of them might importune her, it was necessary for Margaret to conciliate. She therefore flattered some with a slight appearance of preference, for her person was beautiful, and her manners where she desired to please so fascinating, that few could resist her charms. Others, who were rather the votaries of ambition than of love, she continued to allure by listening to their projects, humouring their self-consequence, and assuring them of such little services as she could do them when the present disagreement with her eldest brother should be accommodated. Corisande saw in a few hours much of the manners and, she thought, but too much of the morals of a court. The Queen took no farther notice of her. Preparations were making to pursue the journey to Alençon, and thither, with the rest of the Queen's

Queen's attendants, Corisande was conveyed. Travelling, however, was less uneasy to her than had been the preceding days, for she was now placed in a coach, in which were only two of the Queen's dressers, who seemed to consider her as their superior, and treated her with none of that insulting arrogance which she had experienced from *Les Demoiselles d'Honneur*. Corisande imagined she owed this change to the care of Guiscard, and could not help feeling gratitude towards him; he gave her, however, no opportunity to acknowledge it, for, though he rode twice by the coach, he appeared cautiously to avoid noticing those within it. He had been among the persons who surrounded the Queen in the morning, but his eyes were carefully turned from that part of the room where Corisande appeared. The evening brought them to Alençon. Corisande had a small, but comfortable apartment assigned to

her near the Queen's lodgings. A woman of respectable appearance informed her, she had the Queen's direction to attend her as her servant; and, when the young wanderer awoke on the following morning, she found an handsome wardrobe provided for her, and a purse on her table containing fifty pieces of gold. These the woman assured her were supplied by the Queen; and it was only from her that Corisande would have been contented to have received them.

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CORISANDE had not been many days at Alençon before she began to understand the design with which she had been brought thither. The Baron d'Herault, who was unmarried, and  
whose

whose profusion had considerably impaired his fortune, had no sooner beheld the young heiress of Beauvilliers, and understood her motives for having left her house, than he conceived designs of appropriating to himself this rich inheritance and its fair possessor. The large domain of Montrichard reached within a mile of his principal seigneurie, and their union would comprehend one of the finest estates in that part of France. To change the resolution or evade the orders of the King, which had directed her marriage with one of his favourites, required, as d'Herault was aware, all his political skill. But the difficulty with which he foresaw it would be attended did not discourage him. Queen Margaret was much his friend; she was more — she was his debtor; for, in some of those distresses to which her generous spirit, as well as her unhappy propensity to gallantry, had involved her, d'Herault had fur-

nished her with a considerable sum of money.

But at the present moment the favour of Margaret would do him rather injury than service with her brother and the Queen Mother. D'Herault therefore, leaving it to her to dispose the mind of her young protégé in his favour, departed, by the advice of the Queen of Navarre, for Vincennes, where Henry the Third then was; and she undertook to keep Corisande with her, and to discourage every other lover whom the beauty and fortune of the young heiress might attract.

In lesser affairs, as well as those on which the fate of millions of human beings depended, the crooked and insidious policy of Catharine de Medicis delighted to engage. As d'Herault had considerable power as a great feudal chief, it was the policy of Catharine to keep on good terms with him; and he, equally artful, endeavoured to procure

cure her consent and assistance against the uncle and the lover favoured by the King, by means which he well knew would have their effect on the Queen Mother.

D'Herault then so far received encouragement from those to whom he had applied, and was either so misled by their artifices, or so far misled himself, that he set out elated with hopes of success, and arrived at Alençon four or five days after the Queen of Navarre had there met her brother *Monsieur*.

But even in so short a space new subjects of discontent had arisen between two persons, whose meeting had been without friendship, and whose projected union was founded only on the desire of each to strengthen themselves against others, and not from any affection subsisting between them as brother and sister.

Leagues thus formed can never be permanent. *Monsieur* detested his sister,

and many parts of her conduct gave him but too much ground for complaint. She on her part despised him. His feeble mind and total want of energy and perseverance—his awkward person and repulsive manners, together with a heart filled with every malignant passion, could not fail of making him an object of abhorrence to Margaret, who, though she had weaknesses and vices that degraded her, had many virtues to relieve her failings, and whose courage and generosity would have made her what Ninon de l'Enclos desired to be, *un honnête homme*; though she abandoned herself to excesses which deprived her of the name of *une honnête femme*.

To complete the mutual disgust between the brother and sister, the agents of Catharine were not idle. They fomented every petty dispute among the attendants who formed these two little courts; and Margaret suddenly quitted Alençon.

Alençon in the night, with a very small train, of whom, however, Corisande made one.

A very few days had served to convince her that the region where a strange fatality had placed her was for her the unfittest in the world. Her young heart, warm and alive to every impression of kindness, had attached itself on their first meeting to the Queen of Navarre, who, while she appeared a sufferer like herself, had taken her so generously into her care, and notwithstanding the difference of their rank and of their ages, had talked to her as a friend, while she promised to act like a protectress. Even the neglect with which she was afterwards treated did not dissipate this pleasing illusion. There is to the unexperienced something fascinating in the interest taken in their concerns by a superior; and Margaret had manners so enchanting, with a person at once so lovely and commanding,



that Corisande, who had long seen none but the cold bigots of the cloister, or the arrogant and designing Baronnesses, might well be happy in the hope of having acquired such a friend. But, when Margaret appeared surrounded by her own and her brother's courtiers, and with the *ceremonies* of royalty, the charm was in a great degree dissolved. The conversation indeed of the maids of honour, during the first day's journey from the house of d'Herault, had lessened her respect, in despite of all the arguments she used to persuade herself that some part of that discourse which related to Le beau Guiscard, could never allude to the Queen as his paramour.

But now, before a fortnight had elapsed, there was no possibility of being blind to this and many other unwelcome truths. The envy of which she saw herself the object, it was, she thought, hard to incur for a preference she so little

little desired as that of the Chevalier de St. Laurent. Nor was the excessive malignity borne towards her by Mademoiselle de Saintval; and the more fullen, but not less inveterate hatred of Mademoiselle d'Alincourt, the greatest evils she had to apprehend. The beau Guiscard, who affected not even to be conscious of her existence in the presence of his royal mistress, watched his opportunities so well, that Corisande could not always escape hearing declarations which, as well from the secrecy which he implored her to observe, as from the rank of him who made them, she could not but consider as insulting. But, if to escape or repel these addresses was difficult, Corisande found it much more so to avoid hearing those of the Baron d'Herault.

The Baron approached with every advantage which must, he thought, insure him a welcome reception. He had illustrious birth, a nominally great fortune,

fortune, a good person, and the recommendation of Queen Margaret in his favour; and he even ventured to insinuate, that the commands of the King directing her to bestow herself on the Marquis de Champignac were to be reversed in his favour. Corisande heard all this with impatience, and could hardly prevail on herself to answer him with calmness, for, without precisely knowing why, she had conceived an unconquerable aversion from the person of Monsieur d'Herault. There was an arrogant self-sufficiency about him that almost excited her spleen; and her eyes refused to see in his person the elegance he thought he possessed, and which he was allowed to possess by many others. Corisande thought too there was something ungenerous in his proceeding to beg her of the King as a deodand, by which he hazarded compelling her again into the power of her uncle.

Thither.

Thither, indeed, she now thought her return inevitable; for, Margaret could not protect her against him if he chose to demand her under an order from the King. The Queen's court, in consequence of the dissensions arising at Alençon, was now reduced to three or four young lords, including the Baron d'Herault; the Chevalier de St. Laurent, and five or six other men of inferior rank, her own ladies, and two confessors, who were considered at that time as men who were not idle, as far as their vocation of hearing the delinquency of many of the party extended.

Corisande had few opportunities of seeing the Queen, and never any of conversing with her alone. Margaret, like many others who really intend well, was deprived of the means of executing her good intentions by the pecuniary difficulties in which she had involved herself; and, as it was to her a desirable circumstance that d'Herault should be-

come

come the husband of Corisande, she did not love to recollect how possible it was that the obligation of saving her from the persecution of the Marquis de Champignac would be cancelled if she was now exposed to that of d'Herauld.

Of another persecution Margaret was by no means aware. That the charms of a mere child should affect the heart of the beau Guiscard, never entered into her imagination; nor did she think it possible that one who owed his fortune to her liberality, should venture to look forward to any more permanent establishment; nor, lastly, that Guiscard, who was only a cadet in a house of recent and inferior nobility, should aspire to marry the heiress of one of the first families in France. For all these reasons, and because he always affected the utmost indifference towards Corisande, Margaret had not the least suspicion that St. Laurent not only addressed.

dressed her ward in the most passionate terms, but really felt for her a passion such as he had never before been sensible of. But, though Margaret was blind to this, others were more quick sighted; Mesdemoiselles d'Alincourt and Saint-val had perceived too early for their own repose the preference of Guiscard; but they were both too much in his power to dare to communicate their observations to their mistress, and could only prevent, by every means in their power, interviews between him and this formidable rival, for which Corisande was infinitely obliged to them, as it saved her from some disagreeable repetitions of a determination she had formed never to listen to him with favour.

The dissimulation, the perpetual attempts of the courtiers to circumvent and undermine the fortunes of each other, which are the constant usage of courts, were all hateful to Corisande, who had  
 been

been taught that truth was the foundation and the guard of all other virtues; but, added to these subjects of dislike, was the ill-regulated life of the Queen of Navarre, whose example was followed by those about her; and Corisande, every day more and more sensible of the impropriety of her situation, thought only of the means of escaping from it.

Nothing appeared more easy than her desiring to be dismissed: but, if Margaret would have agreed to do so, whither could she go? On one side she saw her uncle, who had been earnestly soliciting to have her given up to him, and against whom she had no protection but what the Queen of Navarre at present afforded her; on the other she beheld d'Herault, who, when irritated and thrown off his guard by the positive refusal to accept of him, had been indiscreet enough to hint, that he should  
hesitate.

hesitate at nothing to secure the happiness he sought. His fierceness terrified her, yet served only to confirm her resolution never to be his wife.

The unhappy Corisande had never listened to Guiscard but in the hope of obtaining intelligence of her father, which he had promised to collect. But, after allowing of two or three interviews with this intention, she was convinced he did but trifle with her solicitude; yet she imagined from several circumstances she had gathered, that the Comte de Beauvilliers was certainly living, though in prison; but where or by what unfortunate destiny he was still in confinement when the Calvinists were in great force, and so many noblemen of that persuasion still in arms, Corisande could not discover, and her conjectures served only to render her wretched.

In her anxiety to know more than she had gathered from Guiscard, Corisande



sande one day took occasion to say to d'Herault, that every application to her would be for ever useless, and that nothing would ever engage her to give herself away without the consent of her father.

"Your father! Mademoiselle, are you sure then that you have a father?"

"Perfectly sure," replied Corisande, though while she spoke her heart beat, and her voice trembled with the dread of being contradicted.

"Indeed! — It is fortunate indeed that you are so well informed. I suppose, however, you know that he is dead in law?"

The blood that had forsaken her cheeks through fear now returned thither from an emotion of joy. The answer of d'Herault was undoubtedly a confirmation that her father lived.

"The law that calls him so," replied Corisande, "has nothing to do with the affections of nature. Oh! no;—I am  
still

still his child. No law made on earth can dissolve that sacred tie;—it is the pride of my life to be the daughter of this unhappy exile.”

“Exile!” exclaimed d’Herault with a malicious smile: “Do you believe De Beauvilliers is an exile? Oh! then you were doubtless going to seek him in a foreign country when the Queen of Navarre so generously afforded you an asylum. Mademoiselle, you are too young for such an undertaking: let me recommend it to you as a friend, since you are pleased to limit my title to advise you, let me recommend it to you to take care how you irritate those who have the power to let fall on the head of Monsieur de Beauvilliers the punishment which has long been his due.”

Corisande, at this inhuman menace, lost all patience, and, giving a loose to her indignation, she piqued the insolent and violent d’Herault into a more un-  
guarded

guarded avowal than he had before made, and she became certain, from the expressions he used, that her father had been long and was still a prisoner, from whence it was probable, too probable, it was not intended that he should ever be liberated, unless by death.

But, where was this beloved and most unhappy father? In which of the *King's Castles* was his daughter to think of him? Alone, perhaps in want, counting with an hopeless heart the long days of passed captivity, and looking in sick despondence towards those to come; cut off from society—mourning over his murdered happiness, and never hearing the sound of a friendly voice, or seeing any face but that of his jailor. The image of her father in this wretched situation was from this moment ever present to Corisande. His pale image, meagre with famine and loaded with chains, haunted her dreams. Sometimes his voice seemed calling on Corisande, and bidding her

an

an everlasting adieu. At others, he ordered her to fly from those who had destroyed her mother and persecuted her father to death by cruelty more refined and protracted. Occupied with these ideas, Corisande became indifferent even to her own existence. Her sleep and appetite forsook her; the equality of temper, which amidst all the solitudes and discomforts of her wayward destiny she had preserved, was now no longer at her command; and she sometimes thought of the wildest and most hazardous plans of escape; sometimes sunk into torpid dejection. The successes of the Calvinist army, which she had often considered with hope, and listened to the detail of them with internal satisfaction, had now lost much of their effect. Her father was no longer acting in them; she cherished no longer the hope which had soothed even her present unsettled and comfortless state; that in some of the revolutions,

volutions, which continually happened as the fortune of war favoured one party or the other, he might himself rescue her, and give her the only protection she coveted.

The open and imperious addresses of d'Herault, and the clandestine importunity of St. Laurent, were now repelled with equal asperity. The Queen deigned to remonstrate with her in favour of the former; and Corisande spoke to her as she had done on their first meeting, thanking her for the interest her majesty took in her establishment, but declaring that Monsieur d'Herault was not at all less unwelcome to her than De Champignac himself.

Margaret, surprised at the spirit with which she spoke, was immediately struck with the idea that so young a woman could not so peremptorily determine against two men, either of whom would have appeared unexceptionable to most girls of her age, unless she had some concealed

concealed preference for a third. This remark the Queen soon repeated to her ladies; and then it was that their answers, though vague and indirect, pointed out Guiscard as this secretly favoured lover. Margaret, lively and impetuous in all her passions, felt in a moment all the torments of jealousy; and immediately fancying she remembered a thousand minute circumstances which confirmed this, she was disposed to give up Corisande instantly into the power of Boisdaphin, while the ingratitude and perfidy of Le beau Guiscard seemed to merit heavier punishment than she had the power of inflicting. Such was the violence of her anger and indignation, that the persons who had raised this tempest of passion were themselves terrified at the consequences they now foresaw; and though they detested the innocent Corisande, it was with reluctance they obeyed the

Queen, who ordered her immediately to be brought into her presence.

Corisande heard with astonishment and terror of some crime which had excited the Queen's wrath. Her majesty was, however, much too angry to be articulate; and Corisande, conscious of her own innocence, recollected herself, and calmly prepared to answer, when it was understood she knew of what she was accused.

As soon as it was understood to be a charge of having encouraged the passion of the Chevalier de St. Laurent, she resolutely answered—

“Your majesty has been misinformed. I have given no such encouragement. It is true that Monsieur de St. Laurent has spoken to me repeatedly of love; but whenever it has been possible I have refused to listen to him. I have told him that, if his person and his *morals* were agreeable to me, (which they are not,)

nót,) it is not for the Chevalier de St. Laurent to pretend to the daughter of the Count de Beauvilliers."

The haughty air with which these words were delivered, entirely corresponded with their purport, and Margaret felt herself for a moment humbled and debased; who had stooped from the throne, and from the dignity of honour, to favour the minion thus proudly rejected by a child.

There is no sensation so painful as the consciousness of self-degradation. Margaret, unable to endure, and fearful of not concealing, what she felt, ordered Corisande to leave her, bidding her, however, prepare for an immediate return to Monsieur de Boisdauphin, whose solicitations should no longer be denied.—Corisande withdrew in silence, endeavouring to obtain courage to encounter what now appeared inevitable. The Queen, more miserable from self-reproach, forbade any of her attendants



to follow her, and shut herself up to reflect on this new instance of the falsehood and perfidious nature of man.

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AT this time Margaret and her little train were at Chartres, whither she had retired on supposing herself ill-treated by Monsieur, when one of those changes occurred, unaccountable to all who were not immediately about the royal personages concerned; a reconciliation as sudden as the difference which had driven the Queen of Navarre from her brother's Court, was effected; oblivion of all disputes was mutually agreed upon; Henry and his mother promised to forgive those of Margaret's servants who

who had contrived her escape; and she was herself to be reinstated in the situation her conduct had for a while forfeited\*.

Corisande then, to whom the Queen of Navarre had never spoken since the accusation brought against her relative to Guiscard, saw herself, like others who had no will of their own, conveyed among the Queen's retinue to Vin-

\* The continual love intrigues, as well as the various political interests which were always agitating the Courts of France and Navarre, occasioned the most unexpected and discreditable events. Quarrels and reconciliations were frequent. The Queen Mother fomented disagreements between her children, as the best means of securing her own power; and Margaret, who had always some favourite to whom she sacrificed all other considerations, often left her mother in disgust, and secretly escaped to pass her time with one or other of these favoured lovers; while her brothers, who were unfeeling and unprincipled, are said sometimes to have participated too deeply in the vices that disgraced her, and, at others, persecuted and confined her.

cennes, where Henry the Third then held his Court, and she could no longer doubt of being immediately given up to her uncle. During the journey, Guiscard did not appear as on former occasions attending the Queen's litter on horseback, equipped like a hero of romance; he was not seen at all; and from the little Corisande could gather from the hints and broken conversation she heard among the dressers and other persons, she thought he was in disgrace with his mistress, and banished her presence for ever.

It was some consolation to be relieved from his importunity, though too many other causes of disquiet still remained to the unhappy Corisande.

But, without any one friend to whom she could confide her sorrows, or who would assist her to escape from them, complaint was useless; and she could only prepare to suffer in silence the *miserics* that awaited her.

To

To attempt once more to escape before she was again in the power of her uncle, was the only means by which it appeared possible for her to avoid a destiny a thousand times worse than death. Yet, how effectuate her escape? and, if effected, to whom could she go? The illusion that had formerly animated her exertions had faded away. Her father certainly lived, but he was no longer able to protect her; he was himself enduring a living death; and even the assurance of his yet existing, (which Corisande once thought it would be comfort enough to know,) now seemed only an aggravation of her sufferings, by inflicting solicitude soothed by no rational hope. Too well apprised of the inexorable nature of the persons in whose power he was held, Corisande could only think of him with the same agonizing sensations as *he* feels, who sees the friend he loves enduring the miseries of an acute disease, from which

there is no deliverance but by death.— In addition to these melancholy reflections, Corisande had reason to dread, that her rejection of either D'Herault or De Champignac might embitter his imprisonment, and accelerate his fate.

To conjectural wretchedness only Corisande was not long left. On the arrival of Queen Margaret at Vincennes, her suite remained at Paris, whither she came herself a few days afterwards; and hardly had an hour passed before a message was sent to Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers, that the Queen desired to see her.

There was no other person present, and Corisande resumed her courage. Margaret began by lamenting that it was no longer possible for her to grant her the asylum she had promised—the Vidame de Boisdauphin had reclaimed his niece, and there was an order issued by the King to have her immediately delivered to him—“ Nor have I, Mademoiselle,”

moiselle," said Margaret, "any power whatever to keep you with me: as the ward of Boissdauphin, you must obey. The wife of the Baron d'Herault *he* might *himself* have protected; nay, he may still protect you, if happily you should have changed your mind."

"Your majesty is entitled to my gratitude," said Corisande. "I am unfortunate, and must endure. I had rather be made miserable by any one else than make myself so. I never will voluntarily become the wife either of Monsieur d'Herault, or of him for whom the Vidame designs me."

The countenance of the Queen lost the calmness it wore at the beginning of the conversation. St. Laurent was not forgotten, and again Margaret gave way to the jealousy which, as far as it related to Corisande's conduct, she had stifled; for, naturally generous, her goodness of heart conquered every passion but that unfortunate one, which

rendered all the rest misunderstood or abortive; and, after the answer Corisande made when her first suspicion was explained, the Queen had forgiven what appeared not only involuntary but uneasy to her, while the royal indignation fell solely on the fickle and ungrateful Guiscard.

But, now it again seemed hardly to be doubted that *her* eyes were not alone fascinated by Guiscard, and that the young heart of Corisande was affected by the same malady. The Queen therefore dismissed her in visible displeasure; and Corisande expected nothing but to be immediately given up to her uncle, who was, she understood, arrived at Paris to receive her.

But, before the Vidame undertook to exercise that power with which the King's pleasure rather than the rights of nature invested him, De Champignac had prevailed upon Boisdauphin to allow him to try what effect his person and eloquence

quence, which he believed to be altogether irresistible, would have on Corisande.

Over the royal trifier, who now made an edict to strip his people, and now took the lap-dog of some unfortunate\* recluse, every intriguer who chose it might by some means or other obtain influence. That of De Champignac was still in its meridian, though he had several rivals, and he contrived it should be at the express desire of the King her brother, that Margaret kept the young heiress some days longer with her.

Corisande, ignorant of this arrangement, was surprised at the delay, yet in hourly expectation of her uncle, when

*\* Il alloit ordinairement avec la Reine son Esponse, par les rues et maisons de Paris, prendre les petits chiens qui leur plaisoient fort : alloient aussi par tous les monasteres des femmes aux environs de Paris, faire quesse de petits chiens, au grand regret des dames qui les avoient.*



De Champignac, causing himself to be announced in great form, was shown into the apartment she occupied.

If it were universally true, that the female heart is never fortified against a handsome coxcomb, Corisande would assuredly have seen the Marquis de Champignac with very different eyes, for his person and face were uncommonly beautiful: they gave indeed rather the idea of the beauty of very early youth, or that of a woman, than of a man of five-and-twenty. His dress, consisting of coloured satin, was studied with the greatest nicety, his laces the finest that could be procured, and his hair most delicately buckled\*. Corisande, much as she had heard of him, beheld him with astonishment, but it was mingled with unconquerable disgust.

\* Le Roy dançoit souvent masqué et faisoit collation avec ses mignon, frisez, et fraisez. Regne de Henri III.

The arrogance and self-consequence with which he addressed her, the reproaches he made her for having, before she knew him, rejected him, together with the conviction he appeared to have that he need only be seen and heard to cause an entire alteration in her sentiments, operated very differently indeed from what he expected. Corisande rejected him with a degree of haughtiness which he had never before experienced; and upon his threatening her, towards the close of the dialogue, that he should appeal to the authority of the Vidame her uncle, she told him, without at all attempting to soften the declaration, that she would meet death in its most hideous form, rather than marry a man from whom her heart and her reason equally recoiled.

Reason! a young woman dare to talk of reason! — De Champignac had never before heard any thing so provokingly

provokingly absurd; never had he before experienced so severe a mortification. Unused to the slightest opposition, and naturally presumptuous and vindictive, he could not a moment stifle the rage he felt, and he gave vent to it in the most intemperate manner to the first person he met, who happened to be Mademoiselle Saintval.

This young lady listened to him a while in silence; and then laughing immoderately at his distress, she asked him, if it was really possible he could be ignorant of what was notorious to every body else?

De Champignac demanded an explanation; and the Demoiselle named St. Laurent as the favoured lover of Corisande; adding, that his absence was partly in compliance with an order given by the Queen of Navarre; but yet more, that he might concert measures to carry off Corisande to one  
of

of the fortresses of the Hugonots, where her reception was already secured, and where he was to marry her.

Stung to fury, the Marquis quitted his malicious informer, who rejoiced in the hope of gratifying her revenge against St. Laurent; while De Champignac immediately applied to the King, and demanded permission to seek from Guiscarde such satisfaction as his injured honour and disappointed love demanded.

Henry, who detested St. Laurent, would rather have had De Champignac take his remedy by assassination than that he should risk his life in duel with him. But De Champignac, piqued that it should be supposed there was any hazard to *him* from the skill or courage of the Beau Guiscarde, whom he affected to despise, pressed for the liberty of summoning him to the field; and Henry, who loved a  
show,

show\*, consented to gratify his favourite, in the hope of punishing the favourite of his sister.

St. Laurent

\* Such kinds of combats were encouraged by the Court; and Henry, as well as the three Queens, Catharine de Medicis, her daughter Queen Margaret of Navarre, and Louisa of Savoy, Henry's Queen, were not unfrequently spectators of these, as well as of the most cruel executions. The following narrative marks the manners of the age, and the character of the last King of the race of Valois.

“ Le Dimanche vingt septieme Avril, pour demesler une querelle née pour fort legere occasion, le jour precedent en la cour du Louvre, entre le Sieur de Quelus, l'un des grands mignons du Roi, et le jeune d'Antragues, que l'on appelloit d'Antraquet, favory de la Maison de Guise:

“ Ledit Quelus, avec Maugiron, et Liverot; et d'Antraquet avec Riberac, et le jeune Shomberg, se trouverent des cinq heures du matin au marché aux Chevaux, prez la Bastille, et la combatirent si furieusement, que le beau Maugiron et le jeune Shomberg demeurerent mort sur la place; Riberac des coups qu'il y receut, mourut le lendemain a midi. Liverot fut six semaines malade, mais enfin reschapa. Antraquet s'en alla sain et sauf avec un  
petit

St. Laurent was challenged to appear on a certain day, according to the forms used at that time ; and to bring with him two friends. Irritated by the rejection he had received from Corisande, for whom his passion was almost frenzy, and his heart reproaching him for ingratitude towards his royal benefactress,

petit coup, qui n'estoit qu'une esgratignure. Quelus, auteur et agreffeur de la noise, de dix-neuf coups qu'il y receut, languit trente-trois jours, et mourut le Jeudi vingtneufiesme Mai à l'hotel de Boisy, ou il profita le grand faveur du Roi, qui falloit tous les jours voir, et ne bouget du chevet de son liect, et qui avoit promis au chirurgiens qui le pensoient, cent mil francs, au cas qu'il revint en convalescence; et a ce beau mignon cent mil ecus, pour lui faire avoir bon courage de guerir.— A la verité, le Roy porta a lui et a Maugiron une merveilleuse amitié; car il les baissa tous deux, morts, fit tondre leur testes, et importer et serrer leur blond cheveux; osta a Quelus les pendans de ses oreilles, que lui meme auparavant lui avoit donnez, et attachez de sa propre main."—This was undoubtedly the age of Chivalry.

St. Laurent

St. Laurent heard the challenge with a desperate kind of satisfaction, and repaired with two friends to the place of assignation — his natural courage redoubled by despair.

The combat was fierce; for De Champignac, with all his effeminacy, was not destitute of personal resolution. He was carried from the field, as it was supposed, mortally wounded; and Le beau Guiscard paid for his temerity with his life. He died covered with wounds, and entreating those about him to bear his last adieu to Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers, and to tell her, that, since to live for her was denied him, he died with pleasure.

One of the Marquis's party was also dangerously hurt; and a young man who was called L'Infelici, and passed for an Italian, who had appeared as one of Guiscard's friends, received a wound in the arm; the other two escaped with little injury.

The

The long confinement of Champignac delivered Corisande from his importunities. Her heart, though it felt no preference for Guiscard, was too good not to be affected by his death; but none but Queen Margaret and herself remembered him a week after it had happened, unless it was Mademoiselle de Saintval, who never having forgiven Guiscard for his preference of Corisande, rejoiced in having been in some measure the means of this catastrophe. Mademoiselle d'Alincourt had retired some time before to expiate the errors of her unfortunate love in a convent.

Margaret, till the grief she really felt for the loss of the last unhappy favourite was mitigated by some rising partiality for another, retired to a house she possessed at Passy. An order of the Queen Mother's would have prevented Corisande from attending her, if either of them had wished for that attendance.

Corisande,



Corisande, therefore, remained at Paris, and saw herself transferred from the suite of Margaret to that of Catharine—a change which added to her apprehensions of never more being allowed to enjoy one moment of freedom, or of repose.

What were the motives of the Queen, who now loaded her with professions of kindness, and requested that, though not in her service, she would be near her person, Corisande could by no means conjecture. If to promote her marriage with De Champignac, all this evidently studied generosity was superfluous, as it had hitherto been understood, that the King's mandate alone was not to be resisted, and that youth and age, beauty and deformity, sense and idiotism, must be subjected to swear eternal affection to each other on the signification of *Tel est notre plaisir*.

Nothing therefore was more strange than that Henry or his mother should endeavour

endeavour to obtain by artful condescension what they might compel by their imperial ordinance. Corisande knew herself to be a defenceless creature, wholly at their mercy. They might take the estates which were yet called hers, and might give them, as many others had been given, to one of the Court minions. Corisande considered their forbearance with surprise; but it was not in her power to feel gratitude, and towards Queen Catharine in particular, in whom she beheld the evil genius that had occasioned so much public and private misery, she felt a degree of detestation which the forms of a Court hardly enabled her to conceal. Had she known the views with which Catharine detained and flattered her, it would have been impossible for her to have submitted to those forms without resistance.

While the two armies, that of the Calvinists under the King of Navarre,  
and

and that of the League under Henry's generals, were engaged in daily skirmishes, and, whenever they met in any numbers, bloody and hard-fought battles ensued; while towns, adhering to one or the other party, were every day taken on one side or the other, and civil war in all its horrors ravaged the distracted kingdom; the two Courts of France and of Navarre not unfrequently met: and, amidst scenes of luxurious magnificence and refined debauchery, the misery of the insulted people was forgotten. But this was an age when *vice lost half its deformity by losing its grossness.*

Catharine of Medicis had not only the art to govern her own offspring, all of whom partook of her disposition, but she had made the more elevated mind and excellent heart of her son-in-law, Henry of Navarre, her study. It was not indeed very difficult to discover by what means he might be seduced, since  
his

his passion for beautiful women very soon disclosed itself; and when she desired to detach the warlike monarch from the pursuit of conquest, and to acquire a knowledge of his plans, she threw in his way some young beauty, whose fascination he had not always the virtue to resist, even when conscious of the snare.

The King of France and the Queen Mother, removing to Chambord on account of an infectious distemper that raged in the neighbourhood of Paris, were there met, on Catharine's invitation, by the King of Navarre. To negotiate for a truce was the ostensible reason of this junction: but both parties had other views, or imagined they had such, as an excuse for forming a temporary league of pleasure, which languished when the two Courts were separated.

Pleasure, therefore, now seemed the business of every body. Assemblies, in  
which

which all who chose it assumed some disguise, were given in this immense edifice\*, and Catharine encouraged the fantastic and extravagant inventions, calculated to intoxicate the young, and pique the sensuality of the fatigued voluptuary. Yet, amidst all this, her political projects never were a moment forgotten. Her present purpose was to attract the King of Navarre by the uncommon beauty of the young Corisande. She wished that he should attach himself to one who would occupy his time, and draw his attention from his too successful warfare. From what she had remarked of the high spirit and strong understanding of the heiress of Beauvilliers, Catharine imagined, that, if the King of Navarre once could be engaged to notice her, her beauty, sense, and simple manners, so unlike those of most of the young women about the

\* The Castle of Chambord.

Court, would for a while at least fix him. As to any principle that might deter her from making an experiment so probably fatal to the peace and honour of the object through whom it was to be made, Catharine de Medicis was too thoroughly a politician to suffer conscientious scruples of any sort to interfere with her views.

With these views, therefore, the Queen condescended to overwhelm Corisande with her gracious attentions. The coldness with which they were received did not change or diminish her bounties: the most becoming dresses were sent as presents; and on a particular night, when there was to be a masque, it was signified to Corisande that she was expected to appear dressed in one which the Queen sent her own tire-woman to fit; and as she had pleaded timidity as a reason against dancing, though it was in truth from feeling that oppression of the heart which made

every such exertion painful to her, Catharine desired her to remain near herself, as a spectator of the pleasures of the evening. Corisande, though indifferent to every thing that was offered her, obeyed, because it was impossible to refuse.

The King of France, his favourites, and many ladies of the Court, appeared in grotesque dresses. Corisande beheld them all with pity bordering on contempt, when her thoughts were called home on observing herself pointed out by the Queen to a nobleman of majestic appearance, who, gazing on her a few moments, approached and spoke to her. It was the King of Navarre.

All the sufferings of her father in the service of this Prince, and the religion he professed, were instantly present to Corisande; and it was these recollections, rather than awe, which made her answers trembling and incoherent. To Henry, however, this *naïveté* had a  
thousand

thousand charms; but, when she recovered herself from this first embarrassment, and answered him with her usual sense and dignity, he thought he beheld a creature indeed of a superior order, and her beauty, dazzling as it was, appeared to be the least of her perfections.

The Queen Mother, assured that the train she had lain would be effectual, was already reckoning upon the advantages to be derived from it: she saw that Henry could hardly tear himself away from the spot where Corisande sat, and that, when some attention to others compelled him to do so, his eyes were continually turned towards her; he seemed to be inquiring about her of every body he spoke to—and it was true, that since he had seen her, he recollected having heard of something singular that had befallen her, but so imperfectly, that in the hurry of a campaign it had been forgotten.



At length he found in one of his own attendants, a person who had made himself master of every particular relative to Corisande; and he was relating them to the King, when a mask, who had long been attentively observing her, approached the object of their conversation.

“ Does Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers enjoy this brilliant spectacle?” said he: “ Does she *receive* as much pleasure as the sight of her gives to all who assist at it?”

Corisande answered carelessly, as she thought such a common-place address required no very serious attention; when the mask contrived, in such a way as made it impossible she should be offended, to turn the discourse on the unfortunate Chevalier de St. Laurent.

“ I knew him,” said he, “ and I envied him the latter part of his destiny.”

“ An

"An extraordinary subject for envy," said Corisande.

"Ah! Mademoiselle, he is surely to be envied who died in the dear assurance that the lovely Corisande de Beauvilliers was not averse to him in life, and that his death was wept by her."

"The death of any other man would have been equally wept—any other man whom I had seen blindly devote himself to destruction, and use *my* name as a pretence for his fatal rashness. I do not know you, Monsieur, but I desire to undeceive you. I gave no cause to the Chevalier de St. Laurent to act as he did."

"I wish to believe you," cried the mask eagerly. "But, alas! Mademoiselle, should the daughter of the Count de Beauvilliers be *here*—here, in the Court of Queen Catharine? Should *she* be the ostensible object of such combats as we have lately witnessed, while her father———" He hesitated.

The heart of Corisande again bounded with the same emotions as had at first induced her to listen to Guiscard. She remembered, indeed, how ill he had fulfilled the promises he had made her, and was afraid she was again about to pursue a hope which always eluded her grasp: but her desire to hear of her father conquered every fear of the consequences of conversing with a stranger; and she caught at the word "Father!"

"Do you know my father?" said she: "What were you about to say of him?"

"I am too young to have known your father, but he was the friend of mine—of that brave unhappy man, with whose fate *his* has in many instances too much similitude. Grant heaven that in the catastrophe it may differ!"

"You speak riddles, stranger! Is it to one whose looks are concealed, and the purport of whose words are mysterious—

ous—is it to such a one I ought to give even a momentary confidence?”

“ Were I to tell you who the unfortunate man is who thus ventures to address you, would you give him pity for his own sake, and attention for your own?”

Corisande was more and more astonished, and uneasy at an address so extraordinary, which was rendered more so by a certain peculiarity of manner, which did not for a moment allow her to suppose there was either deception or impertinence intended. Once more she became persuaded that an occasion offered to hear of her father, and she could not believe that any step could be very wrong that was taken with that intention: therefore, on the stranger's observing to her that their conference was becoming remarkable, and that the King of Navarre was making his way through the surrounding crowd to speak to her, she was hurried into a promise

to meet this unknown person the following evening in an avenue of linden trees, in the most remote part of the gardens of the castle, and near an ancient chapel seldom used. The stranger himself marked the place and the hour. "The courtiers," said he, "will be at play in the King's apartments, the Queen shut up in her cabinet, and no one will be near that unfrequented spot but perhaps a priest, who may perform the evening service to two or three of the superannuated menial servants of the Court. When I tell you I dare not often mingle with the multitude who surround royalty, and that my best security is being unknown; yet, that as noble blood runs in my veins as the proudest in the Court circle can boast, you will guess that I also am one of the proscribed, and judge whether I am not interested for the Count de Beauvilliers and his daughter." Corisande had only time, trembling as she spoke,

to repeat her assurance that she would hear what he had to say of her father in the place where only he could communicate it in safety. He left her, and mingled in the crowd.

The King of Navarre soon after came up to her, but his manner towards her was entirely changed. He sat down by her, and spoke to her rather with the considerate kindness of a brother than the admiration of a lover. He spoke to her of the misfortunes of her father and her family, protesting, that for a parent to be separated from *such* a daughter must be the heaviest of his distresses. The heart of Corisande thanked him, for he confirmed to her that her father lived; but she was unable to speak. The King proceeded to show that he had informed himself of her particular history. "When I first saw you," said he, "I believed that irresistible circumstances had enlisted the heiress of Beauvilliers among the ladies

attendant on the Queen, but I now understand how it happened that you at present make one of them; and believe me, Mademoiselle, my admiration of your beauty is mingled with reverence and respect. Continue that noble consciousness of your own worth, which does you so much honour. Such animals as those who have dared to pretend to you are utterly unworthy of you. Suffer not yourself to be thrown away upon any of them, beautiful Corisande. The time may come when——” At this moment the Queen Mother, who had for some time been observing them, began to fear that Corisande would more easily listen to the King of Navarre than she wished; her intention was to engage him in a pursuit that should occupy all his thoughts, and attach him to the Court for some time. The expression of Corisande’s countenance, which she thought announced approbation and confidence, did not therefore

fore please her. She arose to retire, and the conference was necessarily broken off.

Alone in her apartment, the events of the night occupied the thoughts of Corisande. The dialogue she had held with the stranger excited, however, the most lively interest. "What or who can he be?" she inquired of herself as she recollected all he had said: "A Calvinist, and certainly from his manners a person of rank, how can he be concealed in this place? He seems to take particular interest in my destiny; his father was the friend of mine; he is probably better informed as to the fate of the dear parent I lament than any person I have yet conversed with; I can incur no hazard in meeting such a man, even though I do not know him. But Manon shall go with me." Manon was a young person, whom she had lately taken into her service.



Having formed this resolution, and satisfied herself as to its propriety, she endeavoured to compose her spirits till the time came; and to collect herself as well as she could, she complained of indisposition, and desired leave to remain in her own room the whole day.

At length the hour came when the stranger had told her he should expect her.

Half doubting whether she ought not to recede, Corisande set forth, leaning on the arm of her maid. It was in the month of February, and still winter, yet with a faint promise of the distant spring. There was a sharp wind, and night was already coming on; circumstances which secured her from interruption. Her heart beat as she approached the linden trees, and passed the old chapel, the door of which was open. She looked fearfully towards the place of assignation—the stranger was  
 already

already waiting for her. He advanced to meet her. "You are not alone, Mademoiselle," said he: "suffer me to ask of you to send your woman to some distance. Corisande ordered Manon to retire, but not to lose sight of her. The stranger, whose countenance, though still indistinctly seen, was that of a man of three or four-and-twenty, spoke thus:—

"I will inform you in a few words who I am: you have undoubtedly heard of the unfortunate Count de Montgomeri\*, who, after many years  
of

\* Gabriel de Lorges, Count de Montgomeri, accidentally killed Henry the Second of France in a tournament held in a place near the Bastille, on occasion of the marriage of the King's sister to the Duke of Savoy. Henry insisted on Montgomeri's accepting his defiance, and he wounded him mortally in the eye with a piece of a broken lance. Montgomeri fled to England, and did not return to his own country till it was involved in the civil wars

of exile and persecution, was sacrificed contrary to the faith of a treaty—sacrificed for an involuntary crime, committed many years before, by the cruel and vindictive spirit of Catharine de Medicis.”

“ I have certainly heard much of him,” replied Corifande.

“ I need not then enlarge on his character. He left a numerous family in indigence, some of them doomed to suffer persecution and oppression, even from infancy. I am the second son of that unfortunate man. From twelve years old to the present moment I have been a wanderer: banished and pro-

wars under Charles the Ninth, and was one of the defenders of Rouen in 1562, from whence, when all hope of effectual resistance was lost, he escaped by a daring act of resolution. He was at length taken by the Marechal de Matignon, and, notwithstanding the promise that had been given him that his life should be spared, the inhuman and sanguinary Catharine ordered him to be executed.

scribed,

scribed I have sometimes taken arms with my elder brother; sometimes have, like a pilgrim, travelled through France to visit, and, as far as I could, to protect and comfort three dear unhappy sisters who have found an asylum in Switzerland. I will not detain your attention, Mademoiselle, with the history of my unsettled life. It is now some months since circumstances unnecessary to relate led me to the Abbey and Fortrefs of Mount St. Michel and it was my fortune, by a singular accident, to know, that in that Castle, under the most rigorous confinement, lingers the brave, the estimable de Beauvilliers."

"My father!" exclaimed Corisande; "Oh, heavens! you have seen him then—you have seen him, and are sure that he lives? O tell me, I beseech you then, Monsieur de Montgomeri—"

"Not Montgomeri," said he; "that name must not be uttered in this domain: you alone, Mademoiselle, know

that

that the supposed Italian Infelici is the unhappy Florestan de Montgomeri.— But it is not of myself I ought to speak, or of myself you would wish to hear.— I proceed then to relate the little I know that is to you more interesting :

“ By means, which former transactions put in my power, I obtained access to the Count, vigilantly guarded as he is. A suffering friend of my father's, a brave and gallant officer languishing in such a place, attached my attention and ensured my reverence. I even hazarded an attempt to enable him to escape. I did not then know that he had such a daughter.”

Corisande thanked him with incoherent expressions of gratitude ; such intelligence as he gave her awakened all the tender and filial sentiments she had ever felt towards her father. Oh ! were it possible for her to be admitted to see him—could she once pronounce the name of father and receive his blessing,  
she

she should think no sacrifice too great to obtain such satisfaction:—might she be allowed to share his prison, she would cheerfully devote her life to him.

Such were the sentiments of Corisande; but it is not easy to describe the earnestness, the lively and animated manner in which they were uttered. Montgomeri looked at her with admiration, which every thing she said increased.

“Lovely and excellent Corisande,” said he, “how enchanting is this tenderness! Gracious God! are the tyranny and oppression that imprison your father, and tear you from him, to be thought of without indignation, and even abhorrence, which should arm every honest man against the perpetrators of crimes so detestable?—There are times,” continued he in a stern and even fierce manner—“there are times when I could myself become an assassin—

assassin—when even murder, from which the heart recoils, seems to be dictated by virtue.”

“For Heaven’s sake,” cried Corisande, “for Heaven’s sake recollect yourself. Circumstanced as you are——”

“As I am,” interrupted Montgomeri, “can I feel otherwise than I do?—But, pardon me, I am wrong. Your father—is there nothing you would wish to communicate to him?”

“Communicate? How? by what means? Alas! is he not a prisoner, shut out from all communication?”

“There is a possibility of my getting a message conveyed to him, though of liberating him I own I despair.”

“Oh! gallant and compassionate Montgomeri,” cried Corisande, “if to do that is in your power, might not you procure access to him for me—for me, who would give up to confinement the rest of my life, could I sweeten the remainder of his?”

Montgomeri

Montgomeri represented to her how improbable, if not impossible, it was for her to escape from that splendid prison—the Court, where her former attempt had placed her. He raised too another and more formidable objection in naming the probability of extreme danger to her father's life if she should be detected in such an attempt. “At present,” said he, “the vengeance which even his death would not satisfy, but which sought to satiate itself by inflicting long years of cheerless solitude within the walls of a prison; that vengeance, as if glutted with its various victims, sleeps; De Beauvilliers in his dungeon seems forgotten; but any attempt to escape on his part, or on yours to go to him, might awaken the dormant malice of his persecutors, and perhaps furnish them with an excuse to do, what your refusal of De Champignac is very likely to accelerate; not  
only



only may that excellent man end his life on a scaffold, but his estates may be seized, and——”

“ Oh, do not raise all these difficulties,” cried Corisande; “ true as they may be, I cannot bear to hear of them. As to myself, I am utterly indifferent what shall be my future fortune, could I but once be restored to him. They want only my estate. De Champignac, who had never seen me when his detested pretensions began; De Champignac covets only that: let him take it—then perhaps my father may be permitted to leave his long confinement, and I will promise that neither of us shall appear before these people, nor shall even our distant complaints reproach them. Of them I am afraid; but not of poverty—not of, any destiny they will allow me to share with my father. I will go,” continued she, acquiring new courage and animation as she

the spoke, "I will apply directly to the King—I will declare that I know my father is living—that we desire nothing but to be allowed to go together into exile, and that I willingly abandon all claim to the property which they say is mine."

Montgomeri, however delighted with her courage and affection, here felt in his turn alarmed, and found it would be extremely difficult for him to appease the spirit he had excited. He could have worshipped the lovely indignant Corisande, who appeared to him a being so much superior to any of those frivolous creatures he had usually seen, as to be almost supernatural. But he knew her danger to have been great even before he confided to her that her father still lived; and he saw with terror that her knowledge of it was likely to increase that danger. Himself an exile, and daring to appear at the Court of Henry the Second only while he

was

unknown and could pass for an Italian, he had hazarded much in disclosing who he was; but his friendship for Beauvilliers, his apprehensions as to what would be the destiny of his daughter, and, in truth, dread of seeing her in the arms of another, had impelled him to the step he had taken, though he hardly knew to what end; for he dared not recommend to Corisande to fly, unless he could have secured her safety in flight, and of any means to do that he had not allowed himself time to think: yet, what a temptation at this moment assailed him! Resolute as Corisande appeared to seek her father at all events, was it not possible for him to accompany and protect her in this evasion? The means were his to speak to De Beauvilliers; it was surely possible that he might gratify her by the same means, and what might not be his reward? Her gratitude, her esteem, perhaps her love!—Heaven and earth! the  
mere

mere idea of obtaining her love made him forget every thing else; and with the sophistry usual when a man would persuade himself he is doing right in following his own wishes, he saw every thing that was great and heroic in risking his own life to save her from the snares which surrounded her, and placing her even *near* her imprisoned father, if he could not release him. A thousand other projects, equally delicious and romantic, now followed rapidly in his imagination, and all the dangers he had but a moment before represented in such formidable colours to her mind, now wholly disappeared from his own. To a man of two-and-twenty and a lover, nothing appeared impossible. Naturally eloquent, he was now not to be heard with safety by Corisande, who, whenever her father was in question, suffered her prudence to sleep. Before they parted, Florestan had persuaded himself that he could

conduct

conduct her in safety to Mount St. Michel; and Corisande had suffered herself to believe, that the imprudence of trusting so young a man, and one who was a stranger to her, was to be overlooked, when her only intention was to fulfil the purpose with which she had left Montrichard, and, escaping from the importunities she abhorred and the slavery she contemned, seek refuge in the prison of her father, which she believed it was possible for her to partake. Florestan asked only one day to digest the plan of her escape, and prepare every thing for its execution. Corisande consented to meet him again in the same place on the evening of that day, and hear what his schemes were, promising to raise no obstacles if they appeared feasible; and desiring their success as ardently as the enamoured Florestan, though her motives were yet purely those of filial affection.

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IN the mean time the intriguing genius of Catharine was not idle. She imagined it certain that the King of Navarre was too much fascinated by the beauty of the fair De Beauvilliers to quit the place where she was, or attend to any other pursuit than that of gaining the object of his passion. Henry, on his part, was far from being insensible of her attractions; but his generous feelings, his pity for her as a desolate orphan, and his respect for the honour of her father, his old servant, forbade him to indulge any other sentiments than those of esteem and compassion. He saw the dangers with which she was surrounded, and was filled with indignation against Catharine for the unfeeling and unwomanly projects to which she would sacrifice so much innocence and loveliness. Unfortunately his character was such, that, whatever was the purity of his intentions, any interference on his part would be im-

puted to very different designs, and he could not assume the character of the protector of Corisande but at the risk of injuring her.

At length, after many plans formed and rejected, he determined to interest his sister the Princess Catharine in the fate of this interesting young creature. The Princess of Navarre was then at Pau, seldom having appeared at Court since the tragical death of her mother, and the massacre of the Hugonots.— Henry, who had now many reasons for wishing his sister to be near him, desired her to remove to Limoges, then in possession of the Calvinists; and in full assurance of her compliance, he spoke immediately to Corisande (for the Queen gave him every opportunity he could wish to converse with her), and offered her, with the Princess Catharine, an asylum such as became her condition.

It was the night on which she was

to meet Florestan, and her imagination had been busied in picturing the comfort she should receive in beholding her father, after an absence of so many miserable years. With the sanguine hope of youth and inexperience, all the intervening difficulties had been overlooked, and a growing partiality for Florestan de Montgomeri, of which she was herself unconscious, added to the charm which she found in the idea of certainly seeing her long-lamented parent. If to satisfy her filial affection was delightful, it was still more so to owe the power of doing it to Montgomeri. But the proposal of the King of Navarre threatened to put an end to these visions. Florestan had already given her a caution relative to that Prince, whom he described as honourable in every thing where his passion for beauty was not concerned.

Corisande, though with as little vanity as ever belonged to one who had



been so fed with praise, was yet a woman. She was not fascinated by the supposition of having attracted the admiration of a monarch; but she did not believe that the interest he took in her fate could arise from any other motive than that admiration: yet, relying on the generosity of his character, she frankly told him, that, however flattering his majesty's generous intentions were, she had so great a desire to see her father, that no other prospect in the world could induce her to forego it.

Henry expressed his astonishment and his doubts whether it was possible to execute such a scheme. Corisande, conscious of the propriety of her own intentions, and as little doubting those of Montgomeri, told the King all that had passed, omitting only the name of him who had already seen De Beauvilliers in his prison, and who thought he had the means of introducing her, if not to the sight of her father, yet to  
be

be near and have communication with him.

Henry was astonished at the temerity of one who had proposed such a scheme, as well as at the courage and perseverance of Corisande. He knew that the fate of De Beauvilliers had often depended by the frailest tenure, and that he would have perished long since, had not Catharine, or rather the King of France, feared for the lives of some Catholic prisoners of rank, detained at Rochelle, who would have been executed the moment the death of De Beauvilliers should be known. He had often attempted to negotiate for his release, but had always been refused; and it was certain that he was one of the most obnoxious of the Calvinist noblemen, on account of his former intrigues with England, and the supply of men and money he had more than once obtained from thence. It seemed, therefore, to the King of Navarre, as

if this young man, whoever he was, had laid a snare to possess himself of the daughter, and accelerate the destruction of the father; and, having once entertained this suspicion, the heart of Henry glowed with indignation, and hardly could he prevail on himself to conceal it from Corisande, who already began to repent of her unguarded sincerity, and to entertain greater doubts than before, as to the motives that actuated the King of Navarre.

He tried in vain to prevail upon her to name this adventurer. Corisande evaded even to give the slightest hint that could point out the person, and pleaded her promise solemnly given against betraying one who had trusted to her honour. Henry appeared to acquiesce, and they parted—neither well satisfied with the other, and Corisande extremely dissatisfied with herself.

In such a Court, it was not difficult  
to

to find a person who would undertake whatever was directed by a superior. The King of Navarre easily engaged Manon, the attendant on Corisande, to betray her mistress. He imagined that, in doing this, he was saving from inevitable destruction not only his faithful adherent, the imprisoned De Beauvilliers, but his innocent and interesting daughter.

Corisande, trembling to reflect on what she had done, now hastened to the appointment. Montgomeri was again there before her; and with an appearance of pleasure which she could not determine to crush, he related to her the plan he had formed for their escape and subsequent journey, which he thought could not fail. Having spoken at some length, he awaited Corisande's answer, who faltered, hesitated, and was about to avow to him her imprudent confidence in the King

of Navarre, when a number of persons suddenly issued from the chapel, and came directly towards the place where they were conversing. It was necessary to separate; and Corisande had only time to say she would meet him in the morning at the hour and place appointed, though she much doubted the possibility of their executing their projected flight. Montgomeri would hardly suffer himself to yield to the present danger; but Corisande, assisted by Manon, disappeared among the trees, and, looking back, thought she saw Montgomeri retire unmolested; while she hurried to her apartment, and, with that unguarded trust in every person of whom she thought well, which was one of the strong lines in her character, communicated to Manon what had passed, and her doubts and fears as to the event of what she was about to undertake the next morning.

The

The dawn of that morning hardly appeared, before Corisande, who had not slept during the night, was alert and dressed. Her little preparations were made, and Manon was ready to attend her. The signal without, that had been agreed upon with Montgomeri, was given. They softly descended by a private staircase, and through a subterraneous passage which he had perfectly described; though Corisande saw no occasion for many of the precautions he had desired her to use, since no sentinel or other person was in the way; and they arrived slowly, on account of the darkness, but otherwise without accident, at an excavated arched way, made under one of the ramparts of earth, and then found themselves without the Castle walls, and in the park. The signal was a second time repeated: two men wrapt in long cloaks appeared on horseback. They dismounted; one lifted Corisande on his horse, and the

other took up Manon. - Little was said, and that little in whispers. Without any great exertion of speed, they were soon at a considerable distance from Chambord.

They had not, however, been gone many minutes, when two other horsemen of exactly the same appearance came to the same place, and repeated the same signals. They waited—they rode forward, again gave the signals; but no answers were returned. The morning was now far advanced, and the guard, about to be relieved, would immediately pass near and challenge them. They were far from being able to give an account of themselves, and their longer stay appeared to be totally useless; they therefore rode away, and gave their employer, who anxiously waited for a messenger they had promised to send when they were safely in possession of their prize, an account of their failure.

This

This employer was the King of Navarre himself, who, however vexed to believe the project he had meditated for Corisande's security had failed, yet hoped to convince her, when he saw her, that in what he had done, or rather intended to do, he had consulted only her interest and honour. He waited, therefore, till the hour when the Queen, surrounded by the ladies of her Court, admitted company. He entered among the first, and soon discerned, by whispers and half sentences, that something unusual had happened. The moment he saw Catharine, she reproached him with very little ceremony with having forgotten the respect due to her son, who was his sovereign, as well as to herself, in having carried off a young lady immediately under their protection.

Conscious that he had intended to do this from motives that would not have been believed, could he have avowed them, and astonished and hurt to find



that Corisande was really gone, Henry appeared so confused, and defended himself so ill against the bitter sarcasms of Catharine, that candour itself must have pronounced him guilty of the charge. He retired, and hastened to the Captain of his own guard, to whose care he had the preceding night committed the custody of a prisoner. "Nerac," cried the King in a very angry tone, "where is that man who was at my order taken last night and delivered to your care? and why have you suffered him to escape?"

Nerac assured him, that, if the man had made his escape, it must have been within a very few moments, as he had seen and conversed with him not many minutes before.

Henry, still more astonished, bade Nerac lead the way to the place where his prisoner was confined. As they went, he said, "Is it possible then that this man has not broken his prison?"

Have

Have you conversed with him? Whom does he pretend to be?"

"He is an Italian, Sire," replied Captain Nerac; "it is the young Italian who calls himself Infelici, and who, a few days before your majesty joined the Court of the King of France, fought on the side of St. Laurent, who was killed by De Champignac."

This account was not calculated to put Henry in a better humour. "An Italian!" cried he; "does he say he is an Italian? But show me to him."

The King of Navarre now entered a low room, extremely resembling a prison, under one of the cazernes where his guard were accustomed to pass the night, and which was indeed used as a place of confinement for the soldiers who had committed any misdemeanours. It was dark and dirty. The prisoner, who was sitting in a dejected posture, rose on the entrance of the King. His commanding air and spirited countenance surprised

surprised the monarch. But Henry was still more surprised to see him there, since he had no doubt but that this was the same man with whom Corisande had so rashly engaged herself to go, and yet she was now gone without him.

"You are the person," said Henry, as soon as Nerac at his desire had withdrawn, "who had undertaken, I think, to conduct Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers to her father?"

"I do not know," replied the prisoner, "how you, Sir, became so well acquainted with my intentions: that I had such an intention I avow."

"And whom have you entrusted to execute it for you? Come, Sir, I must not be trifled with; I must insist upon knowing instantly, which road, and under whose conduct, that young lady is gone?"

"Gone!" exclaimed Montgomeri in an agony, which convinced Henry more than a thousand protestations;

"Gone!"

"Gone! Heaven and earth! what do you mean to say?"

"I mean," said Henry, "that the young lady is gone; and I ask you, who probably contrived her flight, with whom?"

"The charge was too precious," said Montgomeri, "to be entrusted to any but myself. If—No! I dare not trust myself with the conjectures that crowd on my mind. Sir, if you are as I have ever believed—if you are what a King ought to be, the guardian and protector of innocence, lose not a moment, send a party of your people after the ruffians that have taken her. Do more, Sir; release me who have committed no crime, and whom it is injustice to detain, and suffer me, oh! suffer me to pursue them, and die if I cannot avenge her!"

Henry, moved at the lively expression of passion, the force of which he was too well acquainted with, and involuntarily

tarily attracted by the courage and energy of the young man, then demanded his name; and when Montgomeri declared who he was, the generous monarch embraced him with affection; deplored the error he had been guilty of when he fancied he had preserved Corisande from the power of an Italian adventurer; and conscious of the danger Montgomeri would incur where he was if his real name were known, he briefly agreed with him on what should be said to conceal it, directed his instant release, and, declaring that he took the *Sieur Infelici* immediately into his service, gave him a party of twenty chosen men, and the assistance of a young officer of undoubted bravery on whom he could depend; and within an hour after the King's first seeing him as a prisoner, Montgomeri was on the road which he imagined *D'Herault* had taken; for he had too much reason to believe

believe that Corisande had fallen into his hands, and would be compelled to become his wife.

It could not be De Champignac who had thus borne off the unhappy victim ; for he was still languishing of the wounds he had received six weeks before, and his recovery was extremely doubtful. Montgomeri knew too well from whence the blow came, but such was the distracted state of his mind, that he was incapable of judging how best to counteract it. He led the men, therefore, towards the usual and most secure residence of D'Herault, a strongly fortified castle on the borders of Perche, where he might secrete his prey against any thing but a regular siege. Montgomeri, unconscious of every thing but the peril of her he loved, would have given the party as little repose as he was capable of taking himself ; but the rest of them, however brave or active, having no such inducement, would not altogether forego

forego their repose ; yet, by great exertion, they reached the Castle of Meillerive early on the second day. They reached ; it but it was only to increase the distraction of Montgomeri. As that province was then in tranquillity, only an ordinary guard was mounted, who, having had no orders to the contrary, admitted the two officers and three or four men, on being told they had commands for the Baron from Court.

The Baron, however, was not there, and Montgomeri felt his error in supposing that he would go where he would probably be so immediately sought for. It was in vain he endeavoured to discover from the concierge of the Castle where his lord was. The answers he received presently convinced him, not only that he was not at Meillerive, but that his people knew not where he was, as it was many weeks since he had visited that house.

The

The companion of Montgomeri now doubted the utility of pursuing him, and thought his orders from the King of Navarre went no further. Montgomeri, whose mind was now agitated even to a state bordering on phrensy, and unable to conceal what he felt even from D'Herault's people, was incapable of arguing with one to whom he could not communicate any portion of his impetuous feelings. He left Meillerville, therefore, alone, and determined in the despair of his heart to find Corisande, wherever she might be, or perish in attempting to find her. That she was lost to him for ever he had now little doubt; but he could yet die before her, and to die was his only wish. The world had long been to him a scene of wretchedness. He had seen Corisande, he had loved her, and he had been charmed by her confidence, and intoxicated with the hope of her love. She was now, he doubted not, the wife



of another, and *he* had no longer any thing to do but to see her and die.

In this disposition of mind he left his companions, without taking leave of them, and set out alone he knew not whither; for he now could less hope to trace the ravisher whom he sought, than when first he began the pursuit.—D'Herault, who had vassals obedient to his will, and every other assistance, and who was remarkable for the opposite qualities of violence and cunning, had in all probability guarded against the rescue of his prisoner. At that time every nobleman's house was a fortress, and every inconsiderable town had some sort of defence, and was garrisoned either by Hugonots or by Catholics. D'Herault, therefore, who, without any principle, adhered to the latter because it was the strongest party, and the religion of the Court had in almost every Catholic house, every convent, and every small village, the power to secrete

secrete and confine the captive Corisande. And Florestan, who, the more he reflected on all this, became more hopeless, could hardly be said to possess his senses; as, unheeding whither he went, because he could not determine whither he ought to go, he suffered his horse to be his guide, and was only reminded by the lassitude of the animal, that it was requisite to give both that and himself some refreshment.

At a small town called Gouet, not far from Orleans, the necessities of both became too importunate to be resisted. Florestan had travelled forty\* leagues with very little other repose than he could find in the granary or barn of some humble and remote farm, and little

\* In certain novels of some reputation, the heroine, though extremely delicate, and so forth, lives not only *days* but *weeks* without food, and executes in that time journeys that would destroy twenty postboys and their horses. This is indeed to carry the romantic *jusqu' à l'impossible*.

other food than milk or buckwheat bread\*, given him by the charitable peasants in the most unfrequented parts of the country—the greater part of them old men, who, no longer capable of bearing arms, had crept back to their cottages, deploring the loss of a son or a nephew, and endeavouring to find among their native woods and rocks an asylum for their gray heads, where the madness of religious warfare might no longer molest them.

Yet, of these, some were still bigots to their prejudices; and with them, as they were for the most part Catholics, Montgomeri well knew it was unsafe to trust himself, since the very suspicion

\* Buckwheat and rye were at this period the food of the peasantry of France, who, from the state of agriculture and the oppressions of their governors, added to the destructive consequences of war, were in extreme indigence in the finest country in the world. Their condition was but little changed within the next two hundred years.

of his being a Hugonot was sufficient to make them forget that he was a man. But there were others who saw that he was unhappy, and relieved his wants without inquiring whither or why he was wandering; the despair in his looks betraying the anguish of his heart.

While her unhappy lover was thus lost to all hope, and vainly searching yet dreading to find her, since there was every probability that he should find her the wretched wife of the Baron d'Herault, what became of the unfortunate Corisande?

With a heavy and foreboding heart, as if conscious that what she was about was not strictly right, yet, that to delay it would plunge her into greater evils—while her fears were conquered by the hope of seeing her father, and her reliance on the honour and integrity of Montgomeri—Corisande, attended by Manon, had left her apartment; and when every thing passed as she had  
been

been taught to expect from the directions he had given her, when the two men were perceived within the covert of the trees he had pointed out to her, many of her apprehensions had subsided, and she was completely in the power of the horsemen, whom she took for Montgomeri, before she suspected that it was not to *him* she had entrusted herself.

It was necessary to proceed without noise, and Corisande had no disposition to talk; yet, when they were more than two miles from Chambord, and entering among rocky defiles, where no great speed could be made, she began to be surprised that her conductor continued so silent as not even to express his joy that their plan had so far succeeded. He had a light helmet on without plumes, the beaver down; but now that it was broad day, Corisande saw his eyes, and they had not the expression, they were not the eyes of Montgomeri. It is not easy to describe  
the

the sensation she felt on that conviction. The man perceived what she was too much terrified to express; he saw that she was ready to faint, and that it was no longer possible to carry on the deception, nor was it now material to him: he boldly, therefore, announced himself and his intentions. It was the Baron d'Herault.

His pride, already suffering from the former coldness and rejection of Corisande, was irritated beyond all his power to conceal it, when she reproached him with his ungenerous deceit, expressed unreservedly her contempt of one who could so basely contrive to trick her into his power, and resolutely assured him that she would die rather than ever consent to belong to such a man.

D'Herault had expected tears and faintings and complainings, and against those usual expressions of fear and resentment he had been prepared; but

the firm tone in which Corisande spoke disappointed and provoked him. His haughty and arrogant spirit could not bear to be scorned by a mere-girl; and forgetting the respect that was due to *her* for whom he affected to feel passion, he reproached her with her own art and duplicity, and added, that he had saved her from the possession of a vagabond adventurer, on whom she was about to throw herself away, unmindful of all she owed to her rank and her honour. He ventured even to go further, and to tell her, that, absolutely in his power as she was, she must not suppose that he would pay her the respect she had ceased to feel for herself, unless he saw that she had sense enough to repent the error she intended to have committed, and to be grateful to him who had interposed to prevent it.

This was not the way to conciliate or appease the sensible and blameless Corisande. A proud consciousness of her

her own value, a contempt for him who would, despite of herself, cheat or compel her to become his wife, and the conviction that she could determine to die rather than submit to dishonour, all contributed to give her answer a degree of firmness, that more abashed her persecutor than any expressions of womanish resentment could have done. He sunk for a while into fullness, and Corisande was at least relieved from the necessity of continuing the dialogue.

By this time they were at a considerable distance from Chambord, and the fatigue of their journey was felt by the horses, as well as by those who guided them. D'Herault, however, had taken his measures; and on entering that immense forest, which at that time overshadowed a great part of the Orleanois, he was joined by a party of about seventy men, all well armed and well mounted, while their party was marked by their white scarfs and the white



crosses in their hats. Soon afterwards they arrived at a sort of fort or fortified barrack in the woods, where some others of the same description appeared to receive them; and Corisande was informed, that here she was to pass the night.

It was now that, retired to a small room with Manon, and the fatigue of such a mode of travelling being suspended, the future appeared in all its horrors to Corisande. She was the sport of fortune, the victim of every one who thought her an object of their cupidity. If the injustice inflicted on her father, and the perfidy of those who had promised to befriend her, had before made her feel averse to her species, she now dared not dwell on the apprehension, which, in despite of herself, intruded on her mind, that it was perhaps Montgomeri himself who had betrayed her into the power of D'Herault. The very supposition seemed to be the  
greatest,

greatest, the most insupportable of all her distresses. If the countenance of Montgomeri concealed the heart of a traitor ; if his apparent candour, bravery, and integrity were assumed only for the most cruel of all purposes, adieu for ever to all confidence in human nature ! it were better to fly from a world where there was neither honour, honesty, nor humanity to be found.

Nothing, however, could have raised this fearful phantom in the imagination of Corisande, but the impossibility of guessing how D'Herault, who was not believed to be at Chambord at the time, should have been acquainted, not only with the moment, but the very appearance and equipage in which Montgomeri was to convey her from thence. Of Manon she had not the least suspicion, nor was it possible for her to imagine the various artifices which had been used to put D'Herault in possession

of all the intelligence which was necessary to his designs.

Repulsed as D'Herault had been, the malignant and stormy passions had now a greater ascendancy over him than either his wish for the fortune, or his inclination for the person, of Corisande ; and he meditated on the most unjustifiable means to humble this proud and disdainful girl, while it would have gratified him to have destroyed before her eyes the insolent Italian adventurer, (for such he believed Montgomeri to be) who had dared to attempt carrying her off, and for whom he doubted not her partiality, while his indignation and spleen hardly allowed him to think of it without giving the most extravagant marks of what he felt. D'Herault, however, did not think proper to provoke the indignation of the high-spirited Corisande while they were yet on their way to the place where she would be wholly

wholly in his power. Though the persons by whom he was now surrounded were his vassals and dependants, he knew that they obeyed him rather through fear than love, and he thought the youth and beauty of Corisande might create for her among them an interest which might be troublesome, if not inimical to his designs. They had been assured her journey was voluntary, and that the necessity for secrecy and guards arose from the revived pretensions of De Champignac, from whom, though she had the greatest aversion to him, she had no other means of escaping.

To avoid the necessity of any conversation with D'Herault, Corisande declared herself so much overcome with fatigue, that it was impossible she could sustain herself, or hope to be able to proceed the next morning, unless she were suffered to take uninterrupted repose. D'Herault made no attempt to

disturb her; and Manon, who was always silent and passive, and seemed to trouble herself very little with doubts as to what was to become of her mistress, was soon in a quiet slumber on a mattress; while Corisande vainly endeavoured to forget herself on another. The idea of Montgomeri, which she had long cherished with pleasure till then unknown, now brought with it the most acute anguish she had ever felt; it was mingled with the pain of reflecting, that, though she knew where her father was, (if indeed she had not even in that been deceived) still she was as little likely to see him as when she was totally ignorant. Even at the very moment when she had made this attempt, she might have occasioned the executioner to let fall the blow that had so long menaced the head of the unfortunate De Beauvilliers.

Wretched whichever way she looked, the unhappy girl, in imploring the  
succour

succour of Heaven, could not help inquiring *why* she was thus persecuted, and why her father, the most excellent of men, was a suffering prisoner; he, who was as humane as he was brave, and whose life had passed in a course of domestic virtues or honourable actions. That Heaven would either deliver them both from their miseries, or enable them to endure whatever might be inflicted, was, however, the consoling reflection with which she once more sought sleep. But the image of Montgomeri, and doubts of his attachment, of his honour, intervened, and the effects of her reasoning were in a moment annihilated.

The morning came, and Corisande, still sleepless, was already prepared for a continuation of what appeared an inevitable journey. But a change was to be made in the manner of her travelling. Snow had fallen during the night; the woods were yet passable, but

on more exposed ground it had drifted : a litter was therefore contrived, into which Corisande, who knew that resistance would only excite insult, entered with her servant, for it was capable of holding them both. Four mules, which belonged to some Spanish soldiers of the League, were harnessed to it. D'Herault had assisted her to get in, but almost without speaking, and they began another day's journey, interrupted only by a second fullen repast at a more remote cabin in the woods. Corisande, when again placed in the litter, could distinguish nothing; she could only listen to the noises without, and remarked, that some of her conductors were Spaniards—but none spoke much. They seemed to suffer from the cold and difficulties of the way. Night came on—the roads were rugged, and even mountainous—and she could hear that the men, murmuring among themselves, seemed to doubt whether

whether any place of safety and refreshment was to be reached that night.

D'Herault himself was, as appeared by his voice, far from feeling, at this moment, that daring confidence in his valour and his resources which he had before affected to display. It was evident that his tone of high command was softened into arguments to procure patience, and promises of reward to restore the failing resolution of the people, particularly the Spaniards. Much that passed could not be distinguished; but Corisande heard enough to encourage some hopes, that mutiny among those he had trusted might by some means or other procure her deliverance.—

At length the conversation without, which she collected only by snatches, convinced her that the followers of D'Herault had compelled him to adopt some resolution contrary to his own wishes. Another half-hour brought them to the gates of a small town, or



rather a fortified village. It was called Beuvron, and stood on an eminence at one extremity of the forest, and commanded an important pass. It had changed its masters three times in the course of the present war, and was now in possession of the Catholics; but D'Herault was, for whatever reason, very unwilling to make it a place of temporary resort, and the impossibility of his proceeding, added to the discontent of his people, could alone have compelled him to determine upon it.

The night, though it was now the end of February, was tempestuous, and the wind drove the snow, sleet, and rain, in mingled torrents, on the heads of the party as they waited at the gates for admittance—which was not granted them till after a long parley, and frequent messages between D'Herault and the officer to whom the care of the town was committed on the part of the King. D'Herault, though known to be one of the fiercest

fiercest persecutors of the Calvinists, was considered as too much attached to the Guises, whose intrigues and power, long dreaded by the Court, had lately appeared more formidable than ever; and, consequently, all the adherents of the House of Lorraine were feared and hated by Catharine and her son.

Such accommodations, however, as the commandant of this little town could give were at length granted. D'Herauld accounted his own way for the singular circumstance of his having with him a young and beautiful woman; and the commander, who was called the Chevalier de Vieuxpont, directed that she should have every attention the situation would allow. Corisande was, therefore, once more left to her repose, her servant only was admitted to the room; and being overcome by fatigue, she slept (though still without undressing herself) for the first time since  
the

the commencement of this enforced journey.

This repose, so necessary to her exhausted spirits, she had enjoyed some hours, when a sudden and violent noise in the street startled her. She arose, and listened with undescrivable terror to the shrieks of women and furious threats of men, intermingled with the discharge of fire-arms and the clashing of swords. "Kill, kill! spare none of them!" was uttered by a hoarse and thundering voice immediately near the window of the room, and the clamour redoubled. Consternation and terror deprived her for a moment of voice and motion, while her maid clung to her, shrieking and absolutely frantic with terror. Doubts, however, of what all this might be owing to did not last long. D'Herault, accompanied by five or six men, rushed into the room. He was pale, and his eyes seemed starting from their sockets; the sword he held as well

well as his clothes were dashed and stained with blood. Neither speaking first, nor answering the trembling Corisande, he snatched her hand, threw his arms round her waist, and bore her, rather than led her, down stairs: but before they reached the entrance of the house it was filled by armed men; several shot were exchanged, and swords brandished about. Two or three men fell dead at the foot of the staircase, and others pressed over their bodies to seize Corisande, who shrunk back; while D'Herault, menacing and choked with fury, struck at them, and endeavoured to defend her: but he received a pistol shot in the head, and fell, dragging Corisande with him, who was covered with his blood, and became for a moment senseless through extremity of fear. She recovered herself, however, almost immediately, and found herself hurried down the street between two soldiers, whose mercy she had now re-

collection

collection enough to implore with cries and shrieks. Very unavailing would all her efforts have been, but an officer of their own now appeared with a party of Calvinists, for it was they who had by surprise taken possession of the town. He came rapidly along, some persons bearing torches with him, and calling aloud to the soldiers to spare the women, the infants, and the aged, conjuring them to remember that many in the town were Calvinists. "We have the better," said he. "Spare the lives of those who yield—I command you to spare the helpless!" The soldiers who had seized Corisande were by no means disposed to submit to this order, and, to escape from it, they dragged her across the street; but the officer, having caught a glimpse of them, flew after them with the rapidity of lightning, and, throwing himself before them, ordered them to stop. Corisande faintly uttered, "Save me, oh! for the love of God!"—when,  
quite

quite overcome with dread, she sunk down senseless, and recovered to find herself in a room, and supported by Florestan de Montgomeri, who, while some women were assisting to recover her, could not express himself. So violent was the tumult of his mind, he could only repeat, "Thank God, she is not wounded! that blood is not her own!"—while Corisande, not yet able to articulate, recalled her natural presence of mind, just able to keep her senses from again forsaking her.

The tumult in the streets had in some measure subsided. The Calvinists were understood to be once more masters of the place; but Montgomeri knew that the rage of the soldiers, ever renewed by the recollection of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, would never be appeased but by the authority of their leaders; and that, while he attended to the preservation of Corisande, he might occasion the misery or death of many unprotected

unprotected creatures. He felt his duty, and felt how dreadful was the combat between that and his love. To leave Corisande was to expose her to evils which it distracted him but to think of. He listened—he fancied he heard shrieks and the cries of Quarter! Quarter! from the remotest part of the town. Corisande saw his uneasiness. “Your presence is required elsewhere, Sir,” said she in a feeble voice; “do not on my account remain here.”—“Sir!” repeated Florestan; “Sir! and not a word that you are glad to see me? Oh, Corisande!—But this is no time—Go,” said he to one of the men who had accompanied him, “go to Captain Marteau; go—tell him—Yet, stay. Will you, Madam, allow me to conduct you to a place of greater security?”

“I will go,” answered she, “wherever you think I may be safe.”—“Follow us, my friends,” cried Montgomeri to  
several

several women and children who were collected in the same room; "I will protect you all to the best of my power; and, soldiers, have your matches ready."

Florestan then offered his arm to Corilande, who accepted it trembling; nor could she, on trial, support herself without his further assistance; while every step she took added to her consternation; for now, as the morning dawned, the streets were seen strewn with the dying and the dead, and the pavement was slippery with blood. The surprise had been so well conducted, that the Catholic soldiers were, for the most part, found unarmed, and those who had made any resistance did it under the disadvantages of terror and darkness; while the Protestants, provoked and animated to vengeance by repeated acts of cruelty and treachery, had sworn to give no quarter. Montgomeri, as his eyes wandered over this spectacle of horror, seemed to shudder



at his own success, and to exclaim, that war was the most terrible of all scourges that Heaven permits to destroy its wretched creatures. He looked at Corisande; her fair and lovely countenance was polluted and disfigured; her hair hung in disorder over her face, and her cheeks and lips were as pallid as if she were already dead. "I see her, however, once more," said Montgomeri; "I behold her whose image has never been a moment absent from my thoughts. But how and where is she restored to me? Is she still that Corisande I hoped to carry to the bosom of her unhappy father? Is she not estranged—lost? Has she not been the prey as she was in the power of a ruffian?"

These reflections, and the misery he every where saw around him, depressed the gallant heart of Florestan. Hardly could he speak comfort to those who, as he proceeded, continued to gather round

round him as their safeguard from parties who still scoured the streets; hardly could he exert his voice in command. At length he brought the affrighted troop to a church, where a strong guard had been set over some of the women, old people, and children assembled there; his turn of duty he appeared to have successfully executed; another officer was directed by the chief commander of the party to take the next round, and Montgomeri remained on guard with others; — while Corisande was with many women received into the asylum where they were to remain till the present tumult entirely subsided, and the town was secured against a reprisal from the Catholic party, which, it was now said, might very soon be expected.

The melancholy light which now gleamed through the Gothic windows of this old edifice served but to show to Corisande the misery with which she was surrounded; while her ears were shocked  
by

by the various expressions of despair that were on all sides uttered by her wretched fellow sufferers. Here stood a mother, who had escaped with one of her children, and distractedly inquired of those about her if they had seen the rest, or could give her any hopes of their safety, while those to whom she spoke, absorbed in grief and fear for themselves, or on account of those dear to them, heeded her not. Here, on the pavement, sat a young woman, who had seen her husband killed before her eyes, and who could not weep over the half-famished infant at her breast. There an older one uttered execrations against the monsters who had dragged away her daughter, and mocked at her agonies ; and in another place a widow deplored her sons slaughtered before her eyes, and called down the vengeance of every saint in Heaven on their murderers.

Some lay on the pavement, half insensible from terror ; others raved wildly,

ly, and demanded to go out and seek for their friends. None knew Corisande: occupied with their own sufferings, none indeed noticed her; for the women who had at first given her some assistance, had availed themselves of a safe-conduct to the church, where they hoped to meet either their missing children, or some other persons whom they loved. Those who were not disappointed, thought only of the relief they had obtained; while others, who had sustained their spirits by the hope that those they sought were among the numbers who had found a refuge in this asylum, were, on finding their hopes disappointed, driven to a state of distraction.

The sight of Manon would now have been the greatest consolation to Corisande. But she examined every face within her view in vain; Manon did not appear, nor did she ever hear what became of her. The generous heart of Corisande, who could not suspect that the servant, who  
had

had professed great attachment to her, was in fact the person who had betrayed her into the power of D'Herault, felt all the distresses of her present situation, aggravated by the fears she entertained for the fate of this unfortunate girl.

Every moment as it passed increased the misery to be undergone by the sad group who were collected in this place. Some of the unhappy people were wounded. Cold and hunger, weariness and despair, were, more or less, suffered by all. Yet these were but a very trifling, a very inconsiderable part of the evils which only in one day the dæmon of war inflicts on the wretches whose miserable destiny it is to be where his devastations are sent forth. Yet war is said to be the ordinance of Heaven; and the Scriptures are quoted in defence of the kings and lawgivers of the earth, who amuse themselves with this scourge, and exterminating whole  
whole

whole generations of men, call it glory!

While Corisande suffered the sight of misery she could not relieve, and shared it in her own person, Montgomeri was distracted by fears for her present safety, and still more by the dread of what was to happen to her when he could no longer offer her the little protection he now had it in his power to afford her. A body of French Catholics, and a still larger of Spaniards, were known to be on their march to the relief of Beuvron. Resistance would be hopeless. The surviving partisans of the League, whom the humanity of the Colonel de Montluc and his officers had spared, were more numerous than their conquerors; and for these last there was every thing to be apprehended, if the soldiers of the League should reach the town before it could be put into a better state of defence. De Montluc, equally brave

and skilful, was conscious of this; and, after holding a short conference with his officers, he determined to evacuate a post which, never worth the blood that had been spilt even in this last contention, he could not attempt to hold without hazarding a much greater loss. The Colonel, however, gave the Calvinists their choice, whether to remove under his escort to some place of greater safety, or to remain. About forty, who were either the most apprehensive, or who thought themselves the most obnoxious, determined to remove with the family and effects which the war had spared them, and the wretched group prepared for their departure; while Montgomeri with difficulty found an opportunity of speaking to Corisande alone.

The explanation which both so ardently wished was soon made, and such a weight of doubt and uneasiness removed from their minds, as  
greatly,

greatly lessened their sense of present evil. Corisande was still the same whom Montgomeri had so fondly loved; or, rather, her character had attained greater value from the dignity and courage with which, even through the modest medium of her own narrative, it was easy to discover that she had conducted herself. Corisande, convinced not only of Montgomeri's honour but of his ardent attachment to her, reproached herself for having ever suffered a doubt of his integrity to cross her mind; and, when the consciousness of having injured him was added to her former partiality towards him, it appeared to her that it was only justice to love him better than ever.

Thus disposed, it was not possible that either could endure the thought of being again separated; though Corisande persuaded herself, that, once near



her father, she could dismiss Montgomeri to the career of honour which the state of his party and his country called upon him to pursue. Montgomeri too believed that, were Corisande once in a place of safety, he could return to execute the duties of a profession, which, naturally brave as he was, and the son of one who was considered as the hero and victim of his time, he had been induced to embrace rather from circumstances than from inclination; for his manly and sensible heart shrunk from the sight of the misery which he daily saw endured, and which he had often his share in inflicting. He had thrown himself in despair into the troop of Colonel de Montluc, whom he had accidentally met while wandering in search of Corisande, desirous of meeting death, since she was lost to him, and without the remotest expectation that, in consequence of belonging to  
this

this party of men, he should be led to succour her for whom alone he desired to live.

Their meeting was a good omen, that encouraged him to cherish the most flattering visions for the future; and, though surrounded with difficulties and dangers, he fondly imagined that love would enable him to surmount them all.

It was this sanguine hope that supported Corisande through five days and nights of excessive fatigue, during which their small party were conducted by about ninety of the King of Navarre's soldiers, through woods and unfrequented roads, towards Laval, a town on the banks of the river Mayenne, where the Hugonots had at that time one of their strongest garrisons. Montgomeri, who never lost sight of his project relative to the prison of De Beauvilliers, rejoiced that Corisande thus approached nearer to it. He was

now only second in the command of the soldiers who conducted this wandering company, and had very rarely an opportunity of conversing with his lovely charge. But, whenever those opportunities did occur, the hopes with which he inspired her that she might easily reach Avranches, and obtain the interview she had so long languished for, together with the conviction she felt of his affection, gave her courage to sustain without murmuring all the personal inconveniences she was liable to, and to follow the generous propensities of her heart; which were, to assist those of her fellow travellers, who, having young children with them, or labouring under sickness, and with even fewer accommodations than she had, suffered yet more in the course of their painful progress.

At length they reached Laval, and were received with as much hospitality as people could show who were themselves

selfes often distressed for the means of their own subsistence. Corisande was once more secured from the outrages or the stratagems from which she had already suffered so severely; and the hope encouraged by Montgomeri, of her now reaching the place of her father's imprisonment, would almost have obliterated the recollection of her past sufferings, had it not been embittered by doubts whether it was possible for Montgomeri, under his present engagement, to conduct her thither; and without his protection on the way, and the means by which he knew how to obtain admission to the prison of Mount St. Michel, it was improbable, if not impossible, that she could ever reach it.

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IT fortunately happened, that a few days after the reception of the fugitives from Beuvron into the town of Laval, a messenger arrived from the Count de Caumartin, a Protestant Lord, who held the little town of Dinart for the Hugonots, to say, that an English ship, with volunteers, arms, and ammunition, was arrived at that port, and waited only for some officer of trust to conduct them whithersoever their services might be required. The Chevalier d'Arlebois, who commanded the garrison of Laval, hesitated not a moment in his choice of an officer: Florestan de Montgomeri, with whom he was well acquainted, had been in England, where his father had taken so active a part, and at a subsequent period himself had assisted in obtaining supplies of men, money, and warlike stores for the use of the Protestants of France. To Florestan, therefore, the Chevalier d'Arlebois immediately proposed this journey; who undertook it with a degree  
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of zeal which all his solicitude for the success of the cause he was embarked in would not have produced, had it not afforded him an opportunity of conducting Corisande, with an escort such as he trusted would secure her safety, to St. Michel, very near to which his mission would of necessity lead him.

There were, however, many difficulties in the way. Corisande, who considered it certain that she should have the comfort of seeing her father, had repulsed with some displeasure the proposal which, in one of their conversations, Florestan had ventured to make; that she would, by giving him the title of her husband, put an end for ever to the hopes of his rivals, and the malignant interpretation that the envious might give to her former or present conduct.

Whatever coldness Corisande thought it necessary to throw into her refusal, she had undergone a severe struggle

between her sense of duty and her increasing affection for her lover, before she could resolve to declare to him that he would extremely offend her if he ever renewed this proposal till it could be sanctioned by her father.

No expedient remained that Corisande could think of, but that which she had already adopted when she left Montrichard eighteen months before—assuming the habit of a peasant boy. However reluctantly she adopted this disguise, the remarks she had made during her late enforced journey had convinced her it was the least evil of the two. At that period, and indeed for the two following ages, such metamorphoses were in that country neither unusual nor disgraceful; yet, necessity only could have conquered the repugnance of Corisande.

Florestan, who dared not propose it, was yet persuaded of its utility, and readily undertook to provide the necessary

cessary disguise for his lovely mistress. It consisted of a gray habit, *de bure*, a sort of coarse cloth then worn by the peasants, and a long cloak or capot of the same; to which Florestan added such forms and additions as characterized the pilgrim; for, these he foresaw would be absolutely necessary to obtain admission to the Abbey-church of St. Michel, which must be a preliminary step to the introduction which he originally undertook to procure, not without sufficient reason to flatter himself with success.

As Corisande was hardly distinguished from the group with which she had entered Laval, none were acquainted with her history or interested in her conduct; and she was suffered unremarked to depart with the small detachment which Montgomeri was to take with him. The journey was not long; and the respectful and vigilant attention of



her lover left her no other anxiety than for his safety when he should leave her, and for her introduction to the prison. Other doubts and fears, however, assailed her, which related neither to him nor herself. How many fatal accidents might not have befallen her father since she was assured that he was confined in the dungeons of Mount St. Michel? It was very usual for the Court to order the private execution of those whom they thought it hazardous to expose on the scaffold; or, if the Count de Beauvilliers had escaped the private vengeance of the sanguinary Catharine, it was but too probable that the miseries of long confinement had before now put an end to his unhappy life.

Such were the melancholy forebodings with which Corisande approached the coast. From a high ground, at the distance of ten miles, the ocean was perceived through the gloomy medium  
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of a stormy evening ; for the sun, though distant and declining, touched its waves with a few lines of red light. The Bay of Avranches was imperfectly seen ; and it was not till they approached very near that town, that an indistinct mass, half obscured by the shadows of evening and the sea mist that was rising around it, was pointed out by Florestan as the rock on which the abbey and state prison of Mount St. Michel were situated.

It was not exactly in the way of this small military party to stop at Avranches ; but Florestan knew the delay of a few hours would occasion no inconvenience to the service, and discipline was not at that time such as it has since very properly been made. Many of the troops who were in the service of the Princes of Bourbon were volunteers, who were paid sometimes, but oftener provided for themselves ; and almost  
all

all the officers acted solely from zeal for the cause in which they were engaged, and not only supported their own expences, but frequently paid the men who fought under them.

These circumstances, and the credit and influence which the name of Montgomeri had among the Calvinists in this part of Normandy, gave to Florestan a latitude he could not otherwise have taken. He informed the people with him that he should quarter them for that evening at the little village of Genet, while he went himself to Avranches to transact an affair of importance, where it was not necessary for any other person than himself to appear.

Having seen his people disposed of for the night, he quitted them; and with Corisande, whose courage and strength were supported by the near approach of certainty. Montgomeri proceeded to the shore without approaching Avranches. He

He had now conducted his charge to the beach. Corisande had hardly spoken during their walk; and Florestan, who had taken her arm within his as soon as they were beyond observation, felt her tremble, and endeavoured to reassure her. She answered only a few words, broken by sighs;—they expressed her anxiety for the fate of her father, of which she was so soon to hear, and her tender reliance on him. Such, indeed, had been the conduct of Montgomeri since she had been so entirely dependant on him, that her love and confidence were increased, and she had indulged herself in imagining schemes of future felicity, which, could she see her father released, might be realised in another country, with a man whom he must approve, and to whom she hoped they might both owe so much. As the moment, however, approached when all these dreams might assume a  
more

more probable form, or must be dissolved for ever, the heart of Corisande was so painfully agitated, that her limbs could not at that moment have longer sustained her. They arrived on the margin of the sea; the tide was not yet out, and it was necessary to wait till, by its retreat, the sands became passable. The remains of a broken boat afforded them a seat. Corisande seemed more than ever to feel her dependance on her lover, while, fixing her eyes on the waves that rolled between her and the prison of her father, she inquired of herself—Does then that half-seen gloomy building, tremendous even at this distance, still contain the living De Beauvilliers? or, have not his sorrows and his sufferings consigned him long since to the earth, covered by the Gothic cloisters of the abbey?—Oh, my father! if thou art no longer of this world, what has thy wretched daughter

daughter left in it?—Her heart answered, Only Montgomeri. She was conscious that her fate depended on him, and reproached herself that any other affection should occupy her thoughts while the fate of her father was yet unknown to her.

These reflections kept Corisande silent; and Montgomeri felt too much solicitude to be able to converse. As the moment approached when an experiment so long meditated was to be made, he numbered all the probabilities that were against its success, and trembled at the inquiry—what would become of Corisande if it should fail?

Even the immediate step to be taken was perilous. The sands, over which the passage must be made to Mount St. Michel, were often extremely unsafe, from their shifting with the tides; and Montgomeri had heard that persons were frequently lost, and that the experience of the guides themselves did not  
always

always ensure their safety. He had frequently passed over alone and without accident from the very spot where he now stood ; and meditating on the undertaking at a distance, it had appeared without risk : but now that to hazard it was directly necessary, with her who was infinitely dearer to him than his own life, he looked at her with apprehension he could with difficulty conquer, and trembled, lest he might be leading to death the being who could alone make his existence tolerable.

His silence, and the tremulous hand which held hers, at length made Corisande suspect some part of his apprehensions. She questioned him ; and he owned not only his dread on her account of the passage over the sands, but his apprehensions lest death should have deprived him of the humble friend on whose assistance he had so confidently relied when they should reach the rock. Corisande, instead of being deterred by  
these

these fears on the part of her lover, felt all her courage revive. "Is it for me only you fear, Montgomeri?" said she: "Do you recollect of how little value to myself my life has hitherto been, and wherefore should I fear death? If it should now overtake me, could it do so at a better time, unless I were sure of meeting my father?—I should die in attempting to execute what I have always considered as my first duty:—you would receive my last sigh, and my last prayer would be that, if my father lives, you would administer to him the comfort which Heaven denies to my affection." Her voice faltered.—Montgomeri interrupted her, saying in a low and earnest tone, "Do you then think I would survive you?"

Corisande felt herself unable to answer him. "Let us not depress each other, my friend," cried she, wiping away the tears that had filled her eyes; "rather let us see if it be not time to  
begin



begin our half-aquatic journey. If the tide is sufficiently low, can we attempt it too soon? And see, the moon rises over the bay, as if to befriend us. That Providence which saved me from the power of D'Herault, and sent you, Montgomeri, so unexpectedly to my protection—that Providence I will still trust to. I go not into peril to gratify any improper wish, and wherefore should I fear the event?"

This heroism, while it increased the tender admiration of Montgomeri, did not appease his solicitude: but it was no time to recede, or to betray fears for Corisande which she did not feel for herself. He went, therefore, to examine if the sea had sufficiently ebbed. It appeared that they might pass, and there was therefore not a moment to lose.

Montgomeri took her arm within his, and with a beating heart stepped forward from the shingles to the sands beyond

beyond them. The night was now so calm that their flow steps on the wet surface were distinctly heard; nor did any other sound mingle with the distant murmur of the retiring tide, than the short shrill cry of some of those sea birds which feed on the small shell-fish and sand eels, when the water has ebbed, and which the moon was now high enough to guide to their prey; while her beams threw a long line of light on the watery sands, making them appear as if still covered with the sea.

The wind had fallen, which was a fortunate circumstance; for, had it set strongly towards the south, the returning waves would have overtaken the wanderers before they could have reached the rock. Corisande, almost exhausted with fatigue, could not walk fast had it been safe to have done so: but Montgomeri, who dreaded the quicksands, which he knew were sometimes fatal to passengers,

led

led her slowly along, preceding her step by step, and convincing himself the footing was firm before he suffered her to follow him : so that their progress was extremely slow ; and it was two hours after midnight before he saw with joy, chastised however by other fears, that Corisande was in safety at the foot of the rock.

There it was necessary for her again to rest, and there it was that Montgomeri explained to her more particularly than he had yet done his views and hopes as to the manner of obtaining for her present safety, and the means in future of seeing her father. He would not then insist on the cruel necessity he should be under of leaving her, because he felt it to be almost impossible for him to obey the call of duty, till he was at least sure that she would be in a place of security.

When the father of Florestan, the celebrated and unfortunate Count de  
Montgomeri,

Montgomeri, fortified himself in the Tombelaine, he made frequent excursions to the coast, and once had nearly made himself master of the fort of Mount St. Michel, by bribing a monk to admit him by night to the abbey; who, however, treacherously betrayed him: and of those brave men whom he had chosen from his little garrison to accompany him in this hazardous enterprise, all those who preceded him were silently dispatched by the monk one by one as they ascended the scaling ladder, while the Count de Montgomeri himself, with only two of his faithful adherents, discovered the snare just in time to escape from sharing the same fate.

Among those who were supposed to be thus basely murdered, was a gentleman named D'Angers. But it happened that the wretch, whose poniard wounded him in three places, was either too feeble or too unskilful to make any  
of

of these wounds mortal. D'Angers lay among his murdered associates insensible, and covered with their blood and his own, till, in some hours, his recollection returning, he became conscious of all the horrors of his situation, not doubting but that, when the monks came to remove the mangled bodies of their victims, they would finish their incomplete work and murder him. Though he was a brave man in the field, and had often honourably acquitted himself on services of the greatest danger, the terror inspired by the present circumstances disordered his intellects; and, no longer able to reason on consequences, he could think of no method of preserving his life: but, amidst the bleeding and ghastly group that surrounded him, he sat with fixed eyes, as if petrified with the fear of death, yet unconscious of its approach; for, when with the first dawn of morning, through the dim windows of the gloomy

gloomy chamber a monk appeared, who came to dispose the bodies for removal, D'Angers remained motionless; his clotted hair was starting from his head, his eyes were fixed and glazed, and his whole appearance was so terrific, that the cloistered exsecutor of others' orders, who was timid and easily alarmed, started in amazement from this fearful apparition, and it was not till some moments had passed, that he acquired presence of mind enough to recollect that it was not a spectre, but one of Montgomeri's companions who had survived his wounds.

This monk, brought up a Calvinist till he was thirteen, had then, on losing his father, been forced by his mother's relations to renounce the religion he had been taught, and to take the cowl. But, the convert of necessity rather than conviction, his heart had never assented to the vows his lips had pronounced, and superstition and bigotry had not

stilled the voice of conscience or the feelings of nature. As soon, therefore, as he recollected himself, he beheld the wretched man before him with compassion, and felt an earnest desire to save his life.

This was difficult to effect: but the monk having once determined, found means to relieve him. The greatest obstacle arose from the imbecility of mind to which the unfortunate D'Angers was reduced, which threatened every moment to betray him, while, concealed in a cell behind the sacristy, of which the friendly monk had the care, he bound up his wounds, fed, and attended him with a zeal which grew warmer in proportion to the probable success of his endeavours. At the expiration of a fortnight, D'Angers was able to follow his preserver, in the middle of a dark night, to one of those houses which, forming the small town of St. Michel, are scattered at the foot of the rock, where he was kindly received by a widow and her daughters,

penitents

penitents of the compassionate monk. It was long before the miserable D'Angers acquired any degree of health, and his mind appeared never to regain its former tone. He had lost, on the fatal evening of Montgomeri's attempt, his only brother; and he supposed that Montgomeri himself, to whose service they had both been devoted from their childhood, had perished at the same time. Thus, alone in the world, having lost the use of one of his arms, of which the sinews had been cut when he was stabbed, and conscious of no other sentiment than that of gratitude towards those who had snatched him from the jaws of death, D'Angers insensibly found himself attached to Robertine, the youngest of the daughters of his benevolent hostess; and becoming indifferent to every other hope or expectation than that of passing the remainder of a stormy and unhappy life in peace, collecting the



wreck of his small patrimony, and, marrying Robertine, became an inhabitant of Mount St. Michel, where his wife, with her mother, carried on a little commerce, which supported them in a humble way of life—with which D'Angers was, however, perfectly content; and long since weaned from the military ideas of his youth, and a convert to the Catholic religion, he retained nothing of his former self but a lively affection for the memory of his patron and friend Montgomeri, and his family.

Some years passed before any occasion had been given him to show that he still cherished their memory; when Florestan, by his means, and by his having a communication with the inhabitants of the abbey and the state prison, had obtained admission to De Beauvilliers. It was to the care of D'Angers he now intended to recommend Corisande, and by his means he hoped

hoped she would be enabled to see her father. But eighteen months had passed since he had occasion to make the former trial of the faith and affection of D'Angers, and so many events inimical to his views might have happened within that time, that Florestan dared not carry her directly to the house. A rude projection of the rock again afforded shelter to the weary Corisande; while Montgomeri, having related all this, reluctantly left her to seek the house of D'Angers, and assure himself of a welcome for her for whom only he was solicitous.

When he was gone, the sensations of Corisande were those of anxiety and fear. She dreaded lest Montgomeri might perhaps be throwing himself into danger. An alteration of circumstances, caprice, or necessity, might have changed D'Angers; and the most fatal consequences might attend his putting himself in the power of a man whose character was so feeble

and fluctuating. The gloomy stillness of the night gave additional force to these melancholy reflections. Her seat was on a broken stone at the base of that immense rock on which the convent and castle stand. The low wind murmured among the cliffs, hollow and mournful, and brought from a distance the dull ripple of the rising tide, of which the first shallow waves, just touched by the declining moon-beams, began to approach her. More than half an hour had passed; it appeared to Corisande to have been half an age. Had not some mischief befallen Montgomeri? If it had, it was to his zeal to gratify her that it would alone be owing; and where should she find courage to support her if by her means any evil should befall him? It was not, however, worth while to consider what should become of herself, because it was an event which it would be impossible for her to survive.

Almost

Almost another half-hour had crept along, and every moment her uneasiness became more insupportable. A loud chime from the convent above now startled her ;—it was the matin bells calling the monks to prayer. The morning was then far advanced, and still Montgomeri returned not. The bell ceased to echo among the cliffs, and again nothing was heard but the sea and the wind. The pause was more fearful from having been broken. Steps, however, suddenly approached. Corisande listened ;—her heart beat, and her head became giddy. There were, she thought, more footsteps than those of one person ; scarce did she dare look towards the side from whence the sound came :—it grew more distinct, however, and Montgomeri alone appeared. He took her trembling hand in his : “ I have been long absent,” said he, “ but the tidings I am at length enabled to bring are of safety. Corisande, my adored Cori-

“sande, will you not speak to me?” A deep sigh relieved her bursting heart; her words were weak and inarticulate; but in a few seconds, while Montgomeri fondly hung over her, she shed tears, and was soon able to say, that she thought she could, with his assistance, attempt the almost perpendicular rock above them, and which it was, he told her, necessary for her to climb, by no very easy path; to avoid the notice of the sentinels, who were always on the alert on the more open and accessible roads to the town.

Corisande determined to collect all her resolution; and, fatigued and almost exhausted as she was, her confidence in her lover, and the hope of soon arriving at the completion of what had so long been the object of her most ardent wishes, gave her force to proceed. By the assistance of Montgomeri, to whom the ascending path was familiar, the height was conquered, and they arrived at a house where

where a light was perceived. At a signal made by Montgomeri the door was opened, and they entered a small room, where D'Angers received them. His pale countenance and emaciated form, and the quiet languor of his manner, were not calculated to revive the fainting spirits of Corisande. There was a stillness, a cold resignation about him, impressing an idea that he was not a man who would hazard anything for another; and around him were all those badges of superstition which mark the bigoted enthusiast devoted to the ceremonies of a religion which, Corisande had so much reason to know, often obliterated the feelings of humanity.

His wife soon made her appearance, and her reception of her guests was warmer, though it might not be more sincere. She still retained, with some remains of beauty, that bustling vivacity which is often a characteristic of the

Norman women in middling life; and there was a cheerfulness and good humour about her, which, if it did not strengthen the hopes of Corisande as to the future, made the present moment more easy. Rest was absolutely necessary for her exhausted frame. Montgomeri recommended her to her hostess; and a few hours repose enabled her to prepare, with some degree of fortitude, for the painful separation from Montgomeri, which was to happen in the morning.

The morning came but too soon; yet Montgomeri gave her such assurances as to his host, and explained so clearly the means by which he thought she might see her father, and her present safety seemed so certain, that her courage, ever superior to that of the generality of women, was revived, at least as far as related to herself. For Montgomeri, however, all her fears were awakened, though he persuaded her

her that the service he was now upon was not at all dangerous, and gave her the most solemn assurances that he would return as soon as he had conducted the English auxiliaries to the place whither the King of Navarre had directed them. Corisande, who was not ignorant that a soldier cannot always fulfil his private engagements, had many painful doubts as to his return; yet she felt what he owed to honour, and to the excellent Prince into whose service he had now entered (after being only occasionally employed, and being long unknown to him); and the daughter of De Beauvilliers would have blushed to have detained the man she loved from his duty, or to have tarnished his glory, which she knew was dearer to him than life.

Corisande, therefore, saw Montgomery depart without expressing half she felt. When his presence no longer sustained her, she sunk into despond-



ence: yet the solitude she was now in soon became soothing to her who had so long been hurried about at the pleasure of others, and had been compelled to go through all the wretched and wearisome routine of court etiquette\*. Now, if she was far from happy, there was none who questioned her wherefore her countenance was not dressed in smiles. She had the quiet possession of a small upper chamber, the windows of which, overlooking other houses, com-

\* I do not know where to find English phrases that convey exactly the same meaning as these, otherwise I would not use those of another language; for the affectation of doing so is a most disgusting feature in every inferior modern publication. The newspapers suffer no body to walk—they must *promenade*, (which, so used, is no word in any language). Nobody goes to breakfast—it is a *dejeuner*: a noisy impertinent man is a *beau esprit*: and a well-dressed woman, an *elegante*. We shall soon hear of a bar maid as a *limonadiere*; and a vendor of vegetables as a *legumier*.

manded

manded an extensive sea view; and D'Angers and his wife, having seen her in the morning, and desired to know her wishes, which they complied with to the utmost of their power, always left her for the rest of the day to amuse herself in her own way; and no attention could have so well enabled her to conquer the effects of the fatigue she had undergone, or resist those of the anxiety she still felt.

Some time had thus passed before any mention was made of the interview she hoped to obtain with her father. Montgomeri had assured her that he was living, and still in the state prison whose dark and massive walls were beneath those of the abbey that frowned in the fullen gloom of religious magnificence above. Montgomeri had recommended it to her not to speak to D'Angers of De Beauvilliers till he himself began the conversation, and

Corisande

Corisande with difficulty stifled all expressions of impatience.

At length Madame D'Angers was deputed to inform her, that the time was come when, if she had courage enough to trust herself with persons who alone could assist her, and would solemnly engage not to betray herself, or give the least intimation of who she was, she might be obliged with a fight of her father. Corisande, trembling with variety of emotions, promised every thing they required of her; but ventured to ask D'Angers, in a faltering voice, whether he would not himself accompany her. He coldly and somewhat sternly answered, that it was impossible, and, were it otherwise, would be useless; adding, "You will recollect, Mademoiselle, that he to whom I shall owe this favour, which I have solicited to gratify the Chevalier Florestan, knows not who you are. I am not

at

at liberty to tell you by what means I have obtained your admission. The most necessary thing for you to know is, that it may cost not only yourself, but those who, at their own peril, have undertaken to oblige you, liberty, or life, if you should commit the least indiscretion. You must, at seven o'clock this evening, Mademoiselle, be ready to put on a dress with which my wife will furnish you, and silently to follow a person who will be here at that hour. D'Angers then withdrew; and Corisande sat down to collect her spirits for the wished-for yet dreaded interview.

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THROUGH the obscurity of a moonless evening, Corisande, with a beating heart, followed a strange figure:

in the dress of a lay-brother of a convent. He spoke not, till, having slowly proceeded through an arched gateway, he muttered a few words to a person who sat within it, who delivered to him a number of great keys; after which he passed through a court surrounded by high buildings, and, entering a paved passage, knocked softly at a door within it, which was opened by an old recollet, whose venerable figure, as she could just distinguish it by the aid of a dark lantern which he held in his hand, greatly reassured the trembling Corisande. He once turned his eyes towards her; but her face and figure were enveloped in a dark cloak, such as pilgrims wear, and it seemed as if he had merely inquired by this slight look, whether the person before him answered the description he had received. He took up a book which lay on a little table, and, with the lantern in his other hand, he became the guide whom Corisande

fande understood she was to follow into the dark cloister which was now to be entered, and of which there appeared no end. The hollow sound of her conductor's footsteps on the vaults beneath alone broke the silence that reigned in this dreary avenue, which, as its pavement hid their remains, and their memorials covered the walls, seemed to belong only to the dead.

The recollet arrived at a massy folding door: he applied one of the great keys, and it opened with a sound that echoed through the long cloisters and the immense aisles of the cathedral, where Corisande now found herself: it shut, and again loud echos reverberated from the tombs and chapels; then all became silent. The recollet, traversing the body of the cathedral, opened the brass gates that led into the choir, and advanced directly up to the high altar: then, turning to Corisande, he said in a low and solemn

tone—

tone—" Daughter, before I proceed further, consider here in this holy place, whether your resolution is sufficient to bear you through what you have undertaken. You are not to speak—you are by no means to betray the slightest symptom of emotion. I alone know who you are. Should that secret be betrayed to others, you need not be told the consequence. Daughter! swear here, before the saints and angels, and by our holy patron Saint Michael, that you will observe all the conditions I shall enjoin."

Corisande tremulously answered—" Father, I swear!"

"It is well," said the recollet, as he opened a wire grate which enclosed a shrine, where stood a figure in wood intended to represent St Michael. Behind this, concealed from all who were not in possession of the secret, was a small door which led into a very narrow passage, and from thence down a long

long flight of steep stone steps. It was one of the secret ways by which the monks had access to the prison chambers which are under the abbey.

As the moment drew near when Corisande was to see her father, her agitation became so painful, that she doubted whether she could go through the interview. Silently, however, and scarce daring to relieve her heart by frequent and laborious respiration, she followed through the gloomy labyrinth of arched stone passages, where the thickness of the air added to the difficulty with which she supported herself. At length she was in a great cavern-like room, not half of which was visible by the light of the lantern, that, feebly throwing its beams into the dark gloom, served only to show in the midst, one of those cages of wood in which the tyrant Louis the Eleventh confined the wretched victims of despotic power.



power\*, and of which Corisande had frequently heard dreadful descriptions. She scarce dared to turn her eyes towards it: the very idea of seeing her father in such a situation froze her blood; and she could hardly breathe, till the recollect passed on and led her into another dark passage.

At the end of this there was a sort of recess, in which stood a pitcher of water and some kind of food. The monk directed Corisande to take them; and then, to put her again upon her guard, he informed her in a low voice, that he was now about to enter the chamber of the imprisoned De Beauvilliers.

\* This diabolical contrivance was used in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, and some instances of its application have been of much later date. Madame de Genlis, I think, relates in some of her books, that *she* caused one of her pupils, the unfortunate sons of Philip d'Orleans, to begin the demolition of that at Mount St. Michel.

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The heart of Corisande throbbed with redoubled emotion. She cast her eyes forward, and beheld, sitting over the embers of a small fire, a pale and emaciated figure, which, as she more distinctly observed it, she could hardly believe to be her father. He attempted to rise on the entrance of the recollet, but seemed to have lost the free use of his limbs; and supporting himself against a table that stood before him, he expressed in a tremulous voice his thanks for the kindness of the good father, and turned his eyes with an expression of surprise on the stranger, whom he now first perceived. "It is a novice of our order," said the monk: "I have obtained leave to have him with me to-night because I was ill, and not very able to execute alone the offices of charity." A dialogue now ensued, by which it appeared, that, when others had failed, Father Denis, a monk celebrated for the converts he had made

made among the Calvinists, had undertaken to add De Beauvilliers to the number of his penitents, and had now for near two years been in habits of occasional access to him; during which time, though he had obtained no change in his opinions, the excellent character of De Beauvilliers had made a friend of the priest, and had almost convinced him that a Hugonot, without renouncing his errors, might escape eternal perdition. The recollect, in his various attempts to shake the resolution of the Count, had even given him hopes of liberty—if he would declare himself a Catholic: but, disdain-  
 ing to purchase his freedom at the price of his honour, and feeling it to be impossible for him ever to be sincere—or to refrain, should it be again in his power, from taking up arms against those who had destroyed his individual happiness, while they had spread desolation through his country—he would

not

not dissimulate, and rather endured imprisonment, the rigour of which had however been mitigated by the mediation of the recollet, and by the respect which the keeper of this state prison could not help feeling for his illustrious captive.

While De Beauvilliers now talked with the monk, little imagining who was a witness to his conversation, his daughter, who had retired to the end of the room, retraced in his pale and haggard face the features she had learned to gaze on with affection and reverence from her earliest recollection. Though yet considerably under fifty, he appeared much older; for he had lost his hair, save only a few gray locks on his temples, and sorrow, rather than time had furrowed his ingenuous countenance, which yet expressed the character of his mind. He complained not. The monk, fearful of raising in the unknown visitor emotions that might occasion her

to betray herself, cautiously avoided every topic that might lead the prisoner to speak of his family or his captivity. Yet it was but too evident that he suffered most severely in his person from his long detention; and Corisande with difficulty refrained from throwing herself on her knees before him, and bathing with her tears those emaciated hands, which the damps and unwholesome confinement for so many years seemed nearly to have crippled. The various thoughts that crowded on her mind during this conversation, would, had it lasted much longer, have conquered her courage; and she would even then have betrayed herself, if the recollection, apprehensive of what might happen, had not put an end to the scene by rising to take his leave, which as he was about to do, De Beauvilliers thus addressed him:

“ My friend, I have been more than usually ill for three or four days; something

thing seems to tell me that I shall not long need your kindness. In meditating on my departure from a world, which has to me been a sojourn of trial and of suffering, I feel myself ready, nay desirous, to leave it; yet I cannot forget that I *may* still have a daughter, the heiress, perhaps, of my sorrows and afflictions. My wife, my son, the youngest of my girls, all are gone—all have miserably perished! Were I sure my lovely, my unhappy Corisande had shared their fate, sad as it is, I should submit; for death, the inevitable lot of all, is to some persons even in early youth a blessing. The dead are beyond the reach of the calumniator and the oppressor; the dead have fulfilled their destiny, and can suffer no more: but, if my Corisande, most lovely as she promised to be, yet lives, with all that susceptibility, with all that sweetness, however guarded by understanding, good God! to what miseries, to what

indignities, to what sufferings may she not have been exposed! My friend, if, as you have charitably promised me when you were moved by the agonies of a father's heart, if you can obtain for me certain information of my lost child, I will endeavour to endure the worst like a man; and I will prepare for that hour I know must come, and which I feel will come soon."

The recollet attempted to reply; but the solemnity of this address, conscious as he was who heard it, deprived him of his usual presence of mind, and, before he had recovered it, all his fears were realised; for Corisande, who had sustained herself as long as she could, fell totally senseless on the floor.

Imagination may supply, what the pen would fail of describing, the scene that now took place. The Count, with emotions to which words cannot do justice, discovered that it was his daughter whom his trembling and feeble hands

hands were attempting to assist, and Corisande opened her eyes to find herself in the arms of her father.

The monk, to whose friendship and indulgence towards D'Angers this extraordinary meeting had been owing, was moved, by the mute but most affecting expressions of parental and filial love, even to tears; and when the feelings of the father and the daughter permitted them the use of speech, the sacred emotions of the human heart, which, dead as he was to the world, must have some effect even on the most callous, so far influenced the good priest, that, before he separated Corisande from her father, he was induced to promise that he would again hazard their meeting, with whatever risk to himself. De Beauvilliers, as he pressed his hand in speechless gratitude, shed the first tears that had for many years fallen from his eyes; for despair had withered his heart, and it was long



since a settled resignation, interrupted only by his fears for Corisande, had assumed with him the semblance of stoical fortitude. It was not till after a severe struggle that Corisande could determine to quit her father; and he again and again implored the recollect to repeat the promise, which alone would enable him to sustain his existence; when, after fondly folding his Corisande to his heart, he saw the door of his prison close upon him, and shut out this invaluable, this newly found treasure, on which he doted with more ardent affection than if he had never lost it. In Corisande was centred all the love he had borne to his children and their mother, all the hope that yet remained to him upon earth; and when the object thus tenderly considered seemed to be adorned by nature with every perfection of mind and person, and had given so heroic a proof of her attachment to a father so long divided

from

from her, the feelings of that father naturally arose to something like adoration. They were indeed so painful, that to subdue and quiet the tumult of his mind De Beauvilliers had recourse to prayer; and offering to Heaven his gratitude for the new-found blessing, and earnestly imploring continued protection of his beloved Corisande, the excessive agitation of his spirits gradually subsided, and he lay down on the sad pallet, where he had passed so many tedious nights of anguish, with sensations of happiness such as he never imagined he should experience again.

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CORISANDE, safely conducted by the good recollect to the house of

D'Angers, and once more in her own little room, could hardly persuade herself that she had not been in a dream; and such was the delight with which she recollected every word, every look of her father, that she for a while forgot how little probability there was that she could often be admitted to see him, and that he was still a prisoner, his very life depending on the caprice of a number of persons, who were neither guided by reason nor sensible of humanity. The recollect, unlike many of his profession, had a heart neither vitiated or hardened; he knew himself subject to human frailties, and cherished the human feelings of benevolence and pity; and the interview between De Beauvilliers and his daughter, in which he had dreaded only that they should discover each other, had so affected him, that he determined, at whatever risk, to indulge them in frequent meetings, as long as the concierge

cierge of the state prison allowed him to visit the captive at any hour he pleased. And such was the veneration in which the keeper and almost every officer in the castle held this good man, that his request was as a law to them; and they trusted him implicitly to visit the sick and the mourner, of whom they had often but too many under their care. Real benevolence and urbanity must gain access to every heart; and Father Denis, the recollet, had even made some converts from the Calvinist persuasion by the idea his conduct and character were calculated to impress, that the religion of so good a man must be the true religion. Corisande soon saw him again, and heard with indescribable joy, that he would in a few days suffer her to accompany him, when he was to have access to the Count de Beauvilliers.

Thus gratified in the first wish of her

heart, the thoughts of Corisande fled with new sensations of affection and gratitude towards Florestan de Montgomeri, to whom she owed this satisfaction, and of whom her father had spoken in terms of praise and regard, when, in his eagerness to hear, and hers to relate, the strange events which had happened to her, she had spoken of Florestan as her deliverer, and as having been her guide towards St. Michel. Corisande imagined that her father thought of Florestan as he deserved; there was peculiar energy in his voice and manner when he spoke of him, and, fondly recalling all he had said, she ventured to carry her mind beyond the clouds that now hung over their destiny, and to indulge in a thousand delicious dreams of future happiness.

At her second interview with her father, the recollet left them some hours together;

together; and De Beauvilliers became persuaded, that, through his interposition, the keeper of the prison connived at this indulgence. Corisande now passed whole hours, and at length whole days, unquestioned there. Her father almost ceased to remember that he was in confinement: and had he not occasionally heard doubts of the final intentions of the King, or rather of Catharine, as to the lives of those Hugonot lords who had hitherto been spared—or could Corisande have persuaded herself that her father's health, however he had revived on first seeing her, was not slowly declining—she would have had no other wish than for Montgomeri's return, and to share with him the office of sweetening the life of De Beauvilliers.

The Count very frequently spoke of him, dwelling with enthusiastic affection on his virtues; but as time wore away,

and near a month had elapsed without any intelligence having been received of him, the father and the daughter became equally uneasy. The Count, now well assured of the state of his daughter's mind, feared to inquire after him, lest it should add to her pain; while Corisande endeavoured to discover how her father accounted for his absence, without venturing wholly to disclose the increasing anxiety that preyed on her heart.

This uneasy suspense was much aggravated by intelligence that Corisande now collected from her host. The Hugonots were again in considerable force; and the intrigues of the Queen Mother had collected a formidable body of Spaniards and Flemings, under the command of the Prince of Parma, a general more able than any to whom the affairs of the League had been entrusted. A decisive battle was therefore hourly expected;

expected; and the King, dreading equally the Protestants and the Guises, was so undecided, and acted so feebly and irresolutely, that both parties gave way to the greatest excesses; and in the daily skirmishes between them, blood was uselessly shed, and their mutual animosity occasioned the most shocking atrocities. This intelligence failed not to alarm Corisande: for Montgomeri, of whose daring courage she was too certain, and whose prudence she already doubted. Every day as it passed brought her some new cause of alarm. Vague and exaggerated accounts alone reached the melancholy abode of D'Angers, whose gloomy superstition seemed wholly to absorb every other sentiment than affection for the family of Montgomeri; and even that Corisande thought became less active.

The apprehensions that now tormented her had become almost insupportable, when Florestan suddenly appeared.



The eagerness of his manner, and the distress expressed on his countenance, disappeared, as, conversing with Corisande, he found her happier than she had imagined it possible she could ever become, and acknowledged that to him alone she owed the satisfaction she enjoyed. He was allowed to accompany her to her father, and De Beauvilliers embraced them both with more pleasure than his heart had felt since his departure from Montrichard. Montgomeri, however, suffered not the transient delight he felt to deter him too long from explaining, at least to the Count, the danger which now menaced him, though he could hardly resolve to blight the hopes of happiness which illuminated the eyes and glowed on the cheeks of Corisande.

Alone with her father, Florestan could no longer conceal the intelligence he brought. The flames of civil war were raging with greater violence than ever.

ever. The prisons were filled with Hugonots, and several had suffered death; while they retaliated on all the Catholics that fell into their hands. The King of France, wearied by the perpetual contention to which his mother's crooked politics exposed him, and dreading the increasing power of the Guises, was trying to negotiate with the King of Navarre: yet, after the perfidy that had marked the conduct of his brother, and the weakness and versatility of his own, no confidence could be placed in his advances; and they served only to irritate the pride and provoke the insolence of the Duke of Guise, to whom the Parisians adhered with so much zeal, that he was likely to shake Henry on his throne.

There was but too much probability that De Beauvilliers would no longer be suffered to enjoy the indulgences which had lately softened the sufferings of imprisonment. Florestan, indeed,

was

was under the greatest apprehensions for his life; and he represented to him all the grounds he had for these fears, and pointed out the only probability of security to him, which was, to escape to England—

“In England,” said Montgomeri, “you will be safe. Remember, dear Sir, that your friend, my unhappy father, would now have been living had he remained there. It is in your power to escape. Fly, I beseech you—consent to save yourself and your daughter, whose life depends on yours.”

De Beauvilliers was surprised at the impetuosity of his young friend. “Is it in my power to escape, my dear Florestan? Tell me, I beseech you, how?”

Florestan then brought to his recollection the place where his father the Count de Montgomeri would have ascended; having come to the foot of the castle wall, in a dark night, with  
a select

a select number of brave followers, by whose assistance he would have become master of the castle, had they not been treacherously betrayed by a monk, who silently stabbed them one by one as they reached the window at which he waited for them, under the promise of introducing them into the fortress.

"In an obscure place," said Montgomeri, "to which you may have access from these apartments, there are, as I have lately learned, the instruments by which this exploit was to be performed. To descend with the necessary precautions, will be much less hazardous than it was to scale the wall within the narrow cavity which opens to the sea. There I will undertake to be with a boat, which shall convey us to a vessel without the Bay, and in a few hours you will find yourself safely in England."

"And Corisande——" said De Beauvilliers,

"Cori-

"Corisande!" replied Montgomeri: "Does not she form a part in every plan I could dream of, or you would adopt? Would you not trust me to conduct Corisande to England?"

"Yes, my friend, I *would* entrust you with her; and you are, perhaps, the only man in the world in whom I would place so much confidence. But I know your high sense of honour, and I know that to you I owe the only hours of comfort that I have enjoyed for many years." Encouraged by a declaration so flattering, Florestan ventured to name his passion and his hopes; yet, conscious that in his own precarious situation, and while he had himself endeavoured to represent that the life of De Beauvilliers himself was in danger, it was no time to speak of marriage, he rather endeavoured to secure the future than his immediate consent. De Beauvilliers, who had guessed at the state of his affections, was so far from disapproving  
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of them, that he said, " My dear Florestan, you have anticipated my wishes. If the axe, which is I know suspended but by a thread, should fall, to whom can I confide my lovely orphan girl but to you? to whom should I wish to entrust the sole treasure of my heart, but to him who knows its value?—Let me give her to you even now, before we hear more of projects of escape. To-morrow, if you can obtain her consent, I will give you my tenderest blessing, and you will find a Calvinist priest who shall join your hands."

Florestan, transported with joy, could with difficulty express his thanks. He flew to Corisande, who with her usual frankness assured him, that, as her heart had long been his, she should without reluctance obey her father; yet, that she should consider his continued imprisonment as the greatest diminution of her happiness. Florestan had expressed to her his extreme solicitude for the  
release

release of De Beauvilliers, yet without telling half the reason he had to dread the fatal termination of his longer imprisonment.

Only another interview with her father intervened before Corisande became the wife of Montgomeri. Thus secure of her person and her affection, he ventured to tell her the various causes he had of apprehension; and, however unwilling to alarm her even in the first days of their marriage, he knew the necessity there might soon be for her to exert all her fortitude; and he knew that her reason and courage would enable her to make every effort to ward off the evils that might be apprehended, if the worst his fears had foreseen should really happen to De Beauvilliers.

The danger lost half its terrors, if not its magnitude, while he divested it as much as possible of that mystery which adds so greatly to apprehension. He described

described the various views of the contending parties, and pointed out what might be apprehended from the fluctuating politics of one, and the oppressions of the other. Himself proscribed, and likely to be more dangerously circumstanced than ever, he urged Corisande to use all her power over her father to persuade him immediately to consent to escape by the means he had proposed; and he then informed Corisande, that his late absence had been lengthened by the preparations he had made for their evasion and concealment in England.

To obtain her father's immediate concurrence, was the first object of Corisande. After this conference, she waited impatiently for the hour when she could be admitted to an interview with the Count. To her earnest exhortation that he would think seriously of the proposal made him by Florestan, and embrace



embrace the occasion offered him to escape, on which he had hitherto evaded to decide, he thus answered :

“ There is only one thing, my beloved Corisande, dearer to me than thou art—it is my honour. The concierge in whose custody I have been these last seven months, unlike him whom he succeeded, has softened my captivity by every means in his power; he has allowed me, as far as he could, the consolations of friendship and society, and above all, the comfort of seeing thee; for, though he has not himself appeared in it, without his consent it could not have been done.

“ In all this indulgence, of which I might long since have availed myself for my escape, he has trusted to the honour which he knows *ought*, and which he believes *does*, inhabit the breast of a gentleman. Is it De Beauvilliers, my Corisande, who, at the end  
of

of a life of unblemished probity, shall violate this sacred principle? Shall he requite the kindness of this man by bringing on him punishment, and perhaps imprisonment? He, this jailer, in a manner of life so degrading, and so injurious to the best feelings of the heart, has shown himself susceptible of kindness; shall De Beauvilliers so far forget all that is just and noble, as to repay him with ingratitude?—Never. Whatever danger may attend my stay, here I will remain till I can implicate no one in my escape; above all, a man to whom I owe, if not my existence, that my existence has been supportable.

To these arguments Corisande could answer little. For some moments she felt assured that so much goodness and integrity must be the care of Heaven; then dreading the reality of all the evils Florestan had represented to her, and dungeons, chains, famine, and death being present to her imagination, she

wept

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wept in silent anguish a resolution which it appeared impossible for her to change.

Again, however, she attempted to move her father by representing her own sorrow and danger. He replied, that no sorrow was insupportable but that which attended the consciousness of guilt; and that she was now in the protection of a man of such bravery and honour, that his fears for her were at an end. "If," added he, "I were to escape, and know afterwards that this concierge, who has been my friend in the hour of adversity, had perished for me—perished by an act of treachery on my part—never, my Corisande, never would even the sight of your happiness, dear as it is to my heart, console me. A few years of life would, on the terms I should then hold it, be too dearly purchased."

Thus repulsed, yet feeling veneration for those high principles of honour to  
which

which the refusal was owing, Corisande arose to bid adieu to her father for the night: but, her spirits being overcome by the intelligence she had received from Florestan, and by the impossibility of prevailing on the Count, she was so depressed, that it was with difficulty she found resolution enough not to betray, by cries and tears, the sad presentiment that hung on her heart, that she was bidding farewell for ever to a parent so lately found, and so affectionately loved.

She succeeded ill in her endeavours to conceal the terrors that agitated her bosom; and even the fortitude of De Beauvilliers was so shaken, that, when at length he saw her depart, he listened to her footsteps, which the massive door that shut after her prevented him from hearing; and when the dead silence returned, in which he had passed so many melancholy hours before the presence of his daughter reanimated his  
almost

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almost extinguished life, he felt as if he had again lost all that he yet possessed in the world: and annihilation would have been less dreadful to his imagination.

Corisande, on her part, retired in yet greater uneasiness. Montgomeri was absent only for a few hours: he returned late, and fatigued, but endeavoured to reassure his wife, and to persuade her that the next day she might be able to prevail on her father.

The next day, however, put an end to their lingering hopes, and the unhappy Corisande had need of all the tender solicitude of Montgomeri to prevent her sinking under the anguish which assailed her. An express had arrived during the night at the Mont St. Michel, directing the present concierge of the castle to be removed, the prisoners to be more rigorously confined, and no person whatever to be admitted to see them. At the same time the new keeper  
made

made his appearance, and was recognised as a wretch who had formerly been one of the turnkeys, and had been dismissed for brutality and dishonesty. All this D'Angers, to whose knowledge it immediately came, knew; and, in that desponding state which is so infectious, communicated his knowledge to Montgomeri in the presence of Corisande, who with difficulty supported herself till he had concluded what he had to say. He made no comment; but his manner was sufficient to convince Corisande that the hour was now come that she had so long dreaded, and that, amidst the intricate and unwholesome labyrinths beneath the castle, or in the dark bowels of the rock, the unhappy De Beauvilliers would perish, the victim of his own rigid sense of honour.

The images of horror that now haunted her imagination Montgomeri vainly endeavoured to combat: in

truth, he felt them to be but too well founded; and while by a sort of pious fraud he attempted to reason with the fears of his wife, it was easy for her to see that he did not himself believe what he tried to impress on her mind, and that her father's situation was now altogether desperate.

Though that habitual reverence which he had so long cherished for the name of Montgomeri prevented D'Angers himself from speaking of his apprehensions for his own safety if Montgomeri and Corisande remained in his house, the members of his family were by no means so delicate and reserved; and it appeared impossible for them to continue there, either on account of their own safety or that of their hosts. Every hour some new alarm was given; and it seemed as if suspicions were entertained of them by the few inhabitants of the houses at the foot of the rock, since all refused to receive them as lodgers,

lodgers, and appeared uneasy at the short converse with them, which their attempts to procure a temporary shelter made necessary.

The heiress of De Beauvilliers, then, and the gallant son of the heroic Montgomery were reduced to solicit an asylum only for a few hours, and were every where repulsed. D'Angers would still, though hazardous to himself, have suffered them to remain in his house; but Montgomery, having once understood that the longer continuance of this hospitality was attended with risk to D'Angers and his family, he would not listen even to the imperious voice of necessity; and there was some probability that Corisande might have passed in the streets, had not Florestan at length found a very poor man, who, in a hut that hardly kept out the weather, where it was not defended by the huge rock, in a recess of which it was built, supported himself, his wife, and two chil-



dren by fishing. His manner of life and his extreme poverty detached him from the other inhabitants ; and having fewer fears, and by his little boat an easier means of escape, he consented to receive the desolate Corisande and Montgomeri, fearing only for her, and never giving himself time to reflect on his own safety. How greatly it was endangered, however, his wife understood but too well by the difficulty which she saw when they solicited to be received. Fatigue itself failed of procuring her repose ; yet, with Montgomeri the most wretched cabin would have been a palace, had not the cruel ideas of her father's hopeless situation inflicted such anguish as she had never till then felt.

Montgomeri knew her apprehensions were but too well founded ; but to despair while any thing remained to be done was never yet the character of a great mind and an intrepid spirit. So fluctuating were the politics of the day,  
that

that there was always hope of some favourable change; and, though the Guises had now the ascendancy, and in consequence of it many severities had been adopted, and the persecution of the Protestants renewed with increased violence, yet it was always probable that the King's wavering and unsettled temper, and the superior virtue and talents of Henry of Navarre, might in an instant change the face of affairs. But it was also unfortunately true, that De Beauvilliers might miserably perish before any such revolution could save him; and Montgomeri knew that his own person was in extreme hazard, and that it was very probable there might be those now lurking in the town who were charged to arrest him. What would then become of Corisande? to what evils might she not be exposed?

With thoughts like these corroding his mind, it was not possible to assume that appearance of tranquillity which

was necessary to reassure Corisande. Could he once have seen what it would be best to do, he could steadily have pursued it; but, whichever way he looked, difficulty and danger beset him. To leave Corisande circumstanced as she now was, he could not bear to think of; yet he believed the hazard of their remaining where they were. The anxious and undecided manner which Corisande observed, alarmed her more than any thing he could have said. He was restless and silent—always seemed watchful, yet studiously concealing his real thoughts, and sometimes affecting to sleep, that he might avoid her inquiring looks and tremulous questions.

At this cruel period, Corisande gave an instance of that firmness which, wholly different from masculine fierceness, is the highest attribute of a female mind. "Montgomery," cried she, "you have said that there is yet some chance of my poor father's being restored to liberty,

liberty, if any event should give the preponderance to the Calvinist party, and restore the King of Navarre to influence. Go, therefore, my husband, go, and once more place yourself where you can take advantage of circumstances as they arise. I cannot be ignorant that you are yourself in danger here. Should you fall into the hands of our persecutors, what would become of the wretched Corisande, who has only you on earth?—By leaving me here, where I am not known, and can be of no consequence, you may secure the safety of the two beings most dear to me, and by staying you risk every thing.”

By these and other arguments, drawn from the same sources, Corisande incessantly endeavoured to prevail on Montgomeri to leave her; while he protested, that the misery he should suffer in such a separation, and his

solicitude for her safety, would render him altogether incapable of any attention to his own. Corisande, however, returned again and again to the attempt, and at length extorted a promise from him that he would go to Avranches, inform himself of the actual circumstances of his party, and what his honour dictated in regard to returning to his corps, which, by the direction of the King of Navarre, had dispersed, and the individuals that composed it were gone into such winter quarters as they could find.

Between the time that, Corisande left the Court of Catharine and the present period, many months had elapsed, and autumn was rapidly fading into winter.

Montgomeri, believing that something might be done by his departure, yet dreading, even as the stroke of death, to leave his wife, his resolution, which had never before failed him, would now have given way, had not Corisande re-  
pressed

pressed every fear which arose in her own bosom, and continually enforced all the motives that could arouse and fortify his courage. He at length took all the precaution possible in such a place for her safety, gave her all the money he possessed, which he advised her to conceal from the poor people where they lived, and whom he paid beforehand. He then tore himself away; and as the only additional security he could think of, he went to D'Angers, conjuring him by all the friendship and attachment he had borne his family, not wholly to abandon the protection of Corisande. "That I might not risk your safety," said he, "I have forborne, since it was necessary to quit your house, to show any signs of our former correspondence: but now that the alarm seems to have subsided—at least, since its effects are confined wholly to the changes in the prison, where I know you can do no more to serve me, do

not refuse to give such assistance as you can to my wife, should she need it during my absence. Probably, my old friend, this is the last trouble you will ever receive from the unfortunate race of Montgomeri."

D'Angers promised, that, should any application be made to him on the part of Corisande, he would give her what assistance was in his power. Florestan knew that, however cold his manner, his word was inviolable; and, leaving the rock, he took, in the appearance of a peasant, the way to Avranches. There he could learn so very little of what he desired to know, that he was compelled to proceed, and with a heavy and foreboding heart turned continually towards the sea, gazing on the Mount St. Michel, till the intervening distance suffered him to dwell upon it no longer.

When he was gone, Corisande, losing all her heroism, sunk into such dejection, that, if the woman of the cottage,

tage, who was now become attached to her, had not assiduously attended to her, and persuaded her to eat, she would have sat whole days absorbed in sad reflections, and totally unconscious of the lapse of time, and heedless of her own preservation.

But though the unwelcome interruptions of her coarse but well-meaning hostess broke in upon her during the day, the nights were given almost entirely to melancholy reflections. From the low casement of the poor hut that sheltered her she sat gazing on the waves that separated her from Montgomeri, or lifted her melancholy eyes towards the stupendous battlements and towers, within whose massy walls languished, if he yet existed, her unhappy father. On that quarter hope seemed almost excluded: enclosed in a living sepulchre, it was hardly possible that De Beauvilliers, whose health had been so long declining, and who seemed to desire



Life only while he could have the comfort of seeing his daughter and Florestan, should have constitutional strength to resist the pain inflicted by this cruel separation, and the certainty of being separated from them for ever.

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A MELANCHOLY month passed slowly away: it was a much longer period than Corisande had been taught to believe would elapse before the return of Montgomeri; and, as it drew towards a close, her uneasiness became insupportable. Wholly careless of outward circumstances, she wandered along the margin of the rock insensible to the wild blasts of November, that drove the mountain billows from the north-west impetuously into the bay.

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The high and adverse tides would now make the return of Montgomeri more difficult; for the Mount St. Michel was almost inaccessible in boisterous weather, and in strong winds. But, would he indeed return if the weather was less contrary? How many misfortunes might not have befallen him, that might prevent her ever seeing him more? From this fearful probability of the heaviest calamity, Corisande was compelled to turn her eyes, or all the fortitude she inherited from nature, or had acquired by reflection, and even by habit, during a course of misfortunes, which began with her earliest recollection, would never have sustained her from day to day.

Her nights were passed, not in sleep, but in listening to the loud gusts of wind, and the loud waves breaking on the rugged cliffs that surrounded the island. "Does my father, through the deep windows of his prison, hear  
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what I hear? Does he yet live, and does he think of me?" Such were her inquiries during the stormy nights, as shuddering she sought her miserable pallet. The cottage was on that edge of rock the most remote from the coast of France, and looking towards the English Channel. The rays of the morning, therefore, for which she watched, did not show her the spot from whence her only succour or relief could come; and yet every little boat that approached the shore made her heart leap with hope, which soon faded. It was too certain, that of all the favourable events Montgomeri had anticipated, none had happened; and, unless some sinister accident had befallen him, he would at all events have been with her.

Another and another week passed on; the winter came in all its severity to add personal inconveniences to the intolerable anguish of her mind. Fearful visions now haunted her: she beheld  
Montgomeri.

Montgomeri in every possible state of misery ; wounded, a prisoner, languishing on a sick bed, and calling in vain on her, who heard him not, who might never again behold either him or her father. Unable to endure these dreadful apprehensions, she took the desperate resolution of knowing the worst. The poor man and his wife were by this time wholly devoted to her ; for, amidst all her own sufferings, she had ever appeared sensible of theirs ; and the dislike which the distinction of rank often creates among the poor towards those above them, was to them only an additional reason to love Corisande, who was, they knew, a *Demoiselle*, a person of superior birth, and the wife of a *Cavalier*, who was also *très noble* ; yet she treated them with gentleness, and was interested in their welfare ; which attached them much more than the money they had gained, or hoped to gain, from her residence in their humble cabin.

cabin. The man, therefore, was easily prevailed upon to convey her in his boat to the shore near Avranches. She left in the hovel he inhabited every thing but a change of clothes, reserved only a small sum of money, and, paying them the rest, as it was possible she might not return, took leave of her weeping hostess, and embarked.

The weather was dark and stormy, the sea ran high ; and Corisande, having never before been on the water, might have felt personal fear, but that her thoughts were engrossed by her father. She was now quitting the spot where possibly he yet dragged on life, the victim of vindictive tyranny on the part of others, and of exalted honour on his own. The frowning walls now disappearing in the misty gloom, were to be at once his prison and his grave. The anguish these reflections inflicted was mitigated only by the possibility that Montgomeri was yet employed in endeavouring

deavouring to obtain his release: but the dangers he was himself exposed to, and the cruel doubts that forced themselves on her mind as to his safety, not only crushed these hopes, but threw her into that languor, which is the consequence of disappointment approaching despair.

In this distressing state it was, however, necessary for Corisande to exert herself. Her conductor, leaving his boat in a cove of the rock, accompanied her to a poor village, about two miles up the country, where she might unquestioned pass into the road leading towards Paris; for, there only it was probable she should hear of Montgomeri, though how, or to whom to apply she knew not. While the dangers to which her present undertaking exposed her were at some distance, Corisande imagined she could brave them; but now, when the man, who was a sort of  
of

of temporary protector, quitted her, and she was left amidst peasants who noticed her not, and was immediately to encounter the dangers of passing alone through a country still the seat of civil war, her heart sunk, and she had occasion to recall to her mind the little value of the life she was thus about to risk, before she could find resolution to pursue her melancholy road.

The trifling additions that marked a pilgrim, added to the dress of a peasant youth, were, she thought, some protection; but, in endeavouring to alter her feminine appearance, she incurred another risk, of which she had never thought. Since the first expedition when she assumed masculine attire, Corisande had become considerably taller; and, in a country where parties of soldiers were continually wandering about, eager to recruit their numbers, daily diminished by the war and its consequences,

sequences, a tall youth, such as she now appeared to be, could hardly escape from being compelled to take a part with either one or other of the contending factions.

Unconscious of her danger, and encouraged to greater exertion by finding herself yet unmolested and less fatigued than she expected, the poor pilgrim had already advanced within a mile of a village called Bricze, whither the fisherman had directed her, having told her that she might there hire *a bourique* of a man he knew, and who was accustomed to carry various species of provision to Rouen, and sometimes to Paris.—Near the small *bourg* of Brioze was a heathy tract of country, called *les landes de Brioze*. When Corisande entered on this desolate line of wild and uncultivated ground she was extremely fatigued, and of its extent there appeared to be no end. But at length the distant spire of the village church appearing  
above



above the flat surface, though very far off, somewhat reassured her; and the directions of her friendly host having guided her thus far in security, there was reason to hope that she should now reach a place where a safe though very humble conveyance might be found for the rest of her journey.

But, while Corisande exerted all her remaining strength to arrive at Briozé before night-fall, she saw suddenly galloping towards her a number of armed horsemen. They came up to her before it was possible for her even to think of escape, or concealment. To the *Qui vive?* with which it was the general custom to accost all passengers, she was disabled by fear from answering. One of them dismounted and questioned her. She endeavoured to give such an account of herself as might make them believe her to be what she appeared; but her voice failed her, and she was totally incapable of making any resistance,

ance, when he who appeared to be the commander of the party directed two of the men to lift the stranger-youth on horseback. He was immediately obeyed; and Corisande found herself, after a most fatiguing and distressing journey, at a town, which she afterwards learned was Argental. These were the headquarters of the Duke of Guise, who was now collecting troops, and becoming more formidable than ever to his sovereign, though he still temporised and kept up appearances, pretending that the levies he was making were for the protection of the throne.

The officer into whose hands Corisande had fallen, believing that she was a very different person than what she endeavoured to represent, conducted her immediately to the Duke of Guise, to whom he communicated his suspicions that the peasant lad was a woman, and one of no common rank. Pale, trembling, and hardly able to sustain herself,

Corisande

Corisande felt it to be impossible that she could continue the part she had undertaken, and suddenly resolved to relate who she was, whence she came, and every particular, save only her marriage with Montgomeri, whose very name was so obnoxious to the Catholics, and whose safety might be involved in her avowal. The Duke was, on her appearance, instantly assured that it was no pilgrim boy, but a very lovely woman; while the dignity of his manner and person, and a countenance which nature seemed to have marked for command, gave Corisande confidence. She declared herself the daughter of the unfortunate long-imprisoned Count de Beauvilliers, and that she had left Mount St. Michel when his confinement became more severe, in hopes of finding friends who might obtain for her leave to share it, if his release was still denied. The Duke gave her not time to finish this brief history, before

fore he declared the respect and admiration with which her conduct and her person inspired him. He besought her to consider him as her friend, and to allow him to call himself her protector, till she could be restored to the rank and appearance she might so justly claim. Far from seeming desirous of taking any advantage of the accident that had thrown her into his power, he desired she would consider herself as absolutely at liberty to do whatever seemed good in her eyes, reserving only to himself the means of protecting her from the danger her filial piety might involve her in, should she again expose herself a lonely wanderer through a country, where civil discord had long since put an end to all civil polity.

Corisande expressed her gratitude for generosity so unexpected, in words that increased the tender admiration of the Duke. He forgot, while he gazed on her, and heard her, that he was already married;

married; he forgot that Margaret de Valois had still too many claims on his gratitude, if not on his affection; and a more recent attachment, in which he had hazarded the peace of a woman, respectable till his acquaintance with her began, was equally driven from his memory. Even ambition, the first principle of all his actions, yielded at the moment to the violence of this new passion. He saw only Corisande in the world, and to her the world, had he possessed it, would have seemed too small a sacrifice. He expressed, however, so much respect for her virtues, and so well concealed under it this attachment to her person, that, not imagining it possible she could in such an appearance create any sentiment but pity in the mind of any man, and particularly in that of the Duke of Guise, of whose haughty ambitious spirit she had heard so much, and whom she knew to be a married man, Corisande became

as

as easy in her present situation as her miserable anxiety for Montgomeri and her father would suffer her to be. The Duke proposed her taking a female attendant, and furnishing herself with clothes, before they began their journey to Blois, whither he said he would conduct her, placing her when there under the protection of his mother, with whom she would be alike safe from the power of the Queen Catharine, and those pretenders to her favour whom she had so properly rejected. Corisande, who knew not whither to go, and had no means, either of security or information, better than she could obtain by accepting this proposal, consented, though not without much reluctance and many fears.

The Duke of Guise, now more enamoured than ever, pursued his ambitious projects with more alacrity, because he saw that nothing but success could secure to him the power of silencing all other

competitors; and his undaunted spirit suffered him not to doubt being soon so situated as to render all competition ridiculous, and resistance to his will impossible. Henry the Third at present kept his Court at Blois, where the Estates were summoned to meet him. The Duke of Guise had been warned by astrologers, to whom great faith was lent in that age, that some fatal event would be the consequence of his attending this meeting; but disdainful of the information, which he thought came not from the stars, but was a finesse of his enemies, who dreaded his appearance, he set out for Blois with a considerable retinue, of which Corisande most unwillingly made a part.

The dissimulation and perfidy which seemed to be the study of both parties, prevented those who attended on the Queen Mother from openly expressing their astonishment at the return of Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers, under circumstances

cumstances which seemed to declare her to be the mistress of the Duke of Guise. To his mother only, who had apartments in the castle, the Duke deigned to explain this extraordinary appearance. His will was to her a law. She saw Corisande, heard her story, and believed it; for falsehood never looked or spoke as she did, and the Duchess was a woman of a high and liberal spirit. Corisande, therefore, was received with so much goodness, and the manner of this respectable woman towards her was so kind and considerate, that she endured with patience the irksome ceremonies she had to go through of accounting to some of her former acquaintance for her conduct, and of making, as she was directed by the Duchess, an apology to Catharine. The old Queen, whose fatal interference had by this time so embarrassed the affairs of her son, and so ruined the unfortunate people, that it seemed impossible to apply any remedy, was now suf-



fering under personal disease and mental remorse. She gave little attention to those who were formerly considered, only as they were instruments of her wretched politics, and she did not receive Corisande with less civility for believing; (what was the opinion of all who now saw her, except the Duchesse, her protectrice) that she was actually the mistress of the Duke of Guise.

But Corisande herself was, when alone, more than ever wretched. Deprived of all opportunities of hearing of her father's fate, and not daring to inquire after Montgomeri, she wandered over the splendid apartments of the magnificent palace, more solitary, and infinitely more wretched than she had ever been in the hut under the rocks of Mount St. Michel. Every one seemed busy; the courtiers and officers passed and repassed through the apartments; new faces every day appeared; and kept wakeful herself by the increasing anguish of her heart,

she

she found that midnight councils and secret cabals were held in a small tower, terminating a wing of the building; towards which an half concealed window of her cabinet had a distinct view. But among all the persons whom she daily saw, there was not one who seemed interested for her; and the Duke of Guise, who now only came on pretence of visiting his mother, though he treated her with respect almost bordering on adoration, and while he was with her seemed to forget every thing else, yet gave her no opportunity of speaking of De Beauvilliers, and hurried away whenever she attempted to introduce any subject that could lead to that.

With inexpressible anguish and horror of mind she collected from various persons with whom she conversed, that for many weeks passed the Hugonots had suffered only defeat; that many of them had been killed, and more made prisoners; it appeared to be almost impossible

that Montgomeri had escaped one or other of these misfortunes.

While this cruel apprehension daily gained strength, another conviction gave to the unhappy Corisande a greater dread of life such as she now endured, with a greater desire to live; she was likely to give birth to a child of her adored Montgomeri, which would be the object of his fondest affection. Towards her own parent too, she felt all her tenderness increase, and, without knowing why, cherished again the revived hope that he yet lived. It was three months now since she had parted with Montgomeri. A page in the palace with whom she continued to converse, named to her the principal protestant gentlemen who had fallen during that time. The appellation that Montgomeri had taken, after (having entered into the service of the King of Navarre) he dropped that of Infelici, was St. Hermine; no such name was among those officers

officers reported to have been killed, and Corisande thought that the daring bravery of Montgomeri would have made him too conspicuous to have been overlooked, had he fallen: still the uncertainty was most dreadful, and the misery it inflicted was soon aggravated by troubles of a new description.

The behaviour of the Duke of Guise became more particular; he seemed to be incapable of longer concealing the violent passion he had conceived for Corisande, and to be on the point of sacrificing to that passion every other consideration. Even the respect he owed to his mother, under whose care he had himself placed her, appeared likely to be forgotten; and towards Corisande he so suddenly changed his conduct, that she determined to entreat the Duchess to afford her some asylum against what she could not but consider as cancelling every obligation that his former generosity had bestowed. This

application madame de Guise answered with so much scorn and asperity, that the wretched Corisande, dissolved in tears, was unable to speak in her own defence; unable to repel the charges of deception and hypocrisy that were now suddenly brought against her. That she was the daughter of De Beauvilliers was allowed, but the Ducheſs of Guise now told her that her former conduct had been inquired into, and had been found erroneous, even from her first appearance in the world. Respect for the Queen of Navarre alone seemed to check the acrimony with which she was disposed to relate the disgrace which had been attached to the earlier life of Corisande—and the good lady declared that nothing but her consideration for a young woman of family, would prevent her dismissing Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers that moment from her protection.

Corisande now felt all her native spirit animated by the proud consciousness  
of

of innocence; but to vindicate herself against present appearances was impossible, without naming Montgomeri; and an accusation so unexpected, added to the anxieties that had so long preyed on her heart, left her only strength to say, that the following day should fully justify her conduct, and remove her from any future hazard of treatment so inhuman and so little deserved.

The unfortunate Corisande had just strength to retire to her own apartment, where, with a desperate kind of resolution, she prepared immediately to depart, though she knew not whither to go, or what was to become of her—the world seemed to be no longer an abode for her; every party, however inimical to each other, were equally enemies to her honour and her repose; and those who agreed in nothing else, seemed to unite in persecuting her, defenceless as she was, and robbed of all that could give either safety or value to her life.

Oppressed by such distressing reflections, it was useless to attempt to sleep; yet Corisande having dismissed her attendant, lay down for a few hours, and endeavoured to reason herself into some degree of courage and fortitude, by recollecting how often she had been delivered, by the unexpected intervention of providential circumstances, from evils even greater than that which immediately threatened her.

These thoughts had restored to her resolution to meet what she apprehended to be inevitable on the following morning, when she must again become a lonely pilgrim, and, though innocent, bear all the ignominy of guilt.

The next morning, however, presented a scene which changed not only the circumstances of Corisande, but gave a new appearance to the affairs of France. For on that morning the Duke of Guise, having been summoned at an early hour to attend the King in his cabinet,

cabinet, where the council was to assemble, was assassinated with many wounds, as he lifted up the arras to enter the closet. The confusion that followed such an incident may be imagined. Nobody thought of Corisande, nor could she for a considerable time discover the real cause of the hurry and distraction that appeared in the castle; nor did she know why, when she learned the melancholy event\*, she was herself put under arrest. The Duchess of Guise was sent prisoner to the castle of Amboise, constrained to endure suspense which she had no means of ending. Corisande, attended by her servant, remained some days a prisoner. She was then surprised and relieved by the appearance of the

\* The Duke of Guise, and his brother the Cardinal, were killed in the castle of Blois on the 23d of December 1588. Their bodies were consumed to ashes in the chimney of a large hall, that no remains of them might be left to gratify the enthusiasm of the people, by whom the Duke was adored.



King of Navarre, who, with all that generosity and genuine goodness of heart which so strongly marked his character, expressed the liveliest sense of her situation, assured her of his protection, and that he would give immediate orders that every inquiry should be made about Montgomeri, of whom (and it was with inexpressible anguish she heard it) Corisande soon learned that the King knew nothing; not having had any intelligence of him since he went with a detachment of Protestants on a service of great danger; after which, though he was not among the slain, no account had been heard of him as a prisoner. The present state of De Beauvilliers too, whether he yet lived, or had fallen a victim to prolonged and more rigorous confinement, was equally a subject of solicitude. Corisande, considering the King of Navarre rather as her father than as a monarch, hesitated not to relate to him the history of Montgomeri and

and of herself since her involuntary disappearance; and if he had before felt an interest in whatever concerned them, that interest was redoubled by her narrative. Henry, so unaccustomed to check his inclination for any woman whose person was pleasing to him, felt his admiration of Corisande tempered with so much respect for her, and regard for Montgomeri, that, far from meditating how to interrupt it, he found their happiness necessary to his own.

The King of France, the difficulties of whose situation had been greatly increased by the assassination of the Duke and Cardinal de Guise, was at this time compelled to unite himself to the King of Navarre, as nothing but such an alliance could save him from the effects of the storm gathering on all quarters against him. His mother now saw the mischief of her own insidious and dangerous policy, and his weakness and irresolution, had brought upon themselves, and the

the confusion and anarchy in which the kingdom was involved. The reproaches of her conscience were added to the pangs of disease. She died unregretted soon after the murder of the Guises, and was remembered only for the miseries of which she had been the chief instrument, and which long afflicted the unhappy kingdom.

The ascendancy of the King of Navarre, however, then gave him an opportunity of relieving many of his faithful adherents who had suffered in his cause. De Beauvilliers was among the first, and it was with infinite satisfaction he heard from a confidential person whom he had sent to Mount St. Michel, that De Beauvilliers, once more rescued from the horrors of close imprisonment, lived to embrace and bless his daughter—that daughter whose beloved idea had cheered his solitary hours in the dungeon where he had near six months been confined; and to whose piety he always believed

lieved Providence would grant the means of his rescue.

Corisande no sooner heard from the King of Navarre these welcome tidings, than she besought him to permit her to seek her father. Henry, who knew too well how frail was the foundation of his present power, not only consented, but obtained the entire release of the Count de Beauvilliers from his prison, with an order that he might be permitted, unquestioned, to go whithersoever he would. The King's humanity did not stop there. He supplied Corisande with money, gave her letters to persons in whom he could confide, and advised her to hasten with her father to England. "There," said he, "our brave Montgomeri, who is I persuade myself living, will meet you; and meet you in that security, which, notwithstanding present appearances, I dare not flatter myself can yet be found in France." Corisande, speechless from the many contradictory

dictory sensations she now felt, took a silent but not less affecting leave of her generous protector, and, after a journey very different from the first, arrived at the prison of De Beauvilliers.—It is easier to imagine than to describe the meeting between the father and the daughter—their joy empoisoned by the absence of Montgomeri, and the doubts that assailed them both, whether he would ever rejoin them. Corisande, however, checked, in the presence of her father, the expression at least of the anguish that tore her heart, and, since it seemed to be her destiny never to see together the two beings whom she loved, devoted herself apparently to the comfort of him whom Providence had restored to her prayers. De Beauvilliers indeed, whose health had again severely suffered, watched every look and word of Corisande with a degree of anxiety, so eager and unremitting, as could not fail to be injurious to himself, while of

Montgomeri's

Montgomeri's safety he endeavoured to encourage hopes, which Corisande was well convinced he did not entertain.

It was, however, necessary to obey the directions of the King of Navarre. They arrived without accident in England, and found a reception equal to their expectations, from the letters they carried with them. But Corisande, who beheld the sea between her and the country that held Montgomeri, if he yet lived, could not think without pain of removing from its margin. The sea appeared to be the only medium by which she could again behold or receive news of him; and her father, to whom all places were alike, consented to reside in a small house on the western side of Dover, from whence the coast of France was almost always discernible.

There she gave birth to a son, over whom she wept in agonizing fondness, endeavouring for his sake to preserve her health, while she deplored his father,

of whose life she now almost entirely despaired; for no intelligence had been gained, notwithstanding the inquiries of the King of Navarre, and of many of the Protestant lords, who openly asserted their principles, and in whose bravery, and the affection of their leader, Henry de Valois found his chief security against the designs of the League, now become more than ever formidable.

To lose a being, fondly beloved, is dreadful; but to be tormented with conjectures as to the manner of that loss, to imagine that his death might be embittered by famine or by tortures, adds tenfold anguish to the deprivation; and Corisande, ingenious in misery, ceased not to picture every species of wretchedness which her husband might have suffered. Months passed on. De Beauvilliers, long accustomed to resign himself to misfortune, was tranquil, though unhappy. The infant of Corisande, towards whom he looked as the heir of his estates, and  
the

the representative of his family, became every day more dear to him; but nothing really consoled him for the death of Montgomeri, whom he loved, on Corisande's account and his own, with affection more than paternal.

The little boy was now eleven months old. His attempts to speak, which the mother and grandfather thought indicated uncommon intelligence; his features, that, as they became more formed, more strongly resembled those of his father, all contributed to increase the tenderness they felt for him: and it was for his sake rather than their own that De Beauvilliers heard with satisfaction, that, Henry de Valois being no more\*, Henry de Bourbon was now King of France again. To serve the master to whom his youth had been devoted, the Count de Beauvilliers determined to quit his retirement and pass into France. Corisande, whose heart only bled the more when prosperity seemed likely to

\* He was stabbed by Clement, a monk.



return, that Montgomeri would never share, prepared herself and her son to accompany her father; and having occasion to purchase a few necessaries at the town, she walked thither; her child carried in the arms of an English girl who had some time lived with her.—

They were returning, when two men, who appeared to be Turks or Algerines, extremely poor and distressed, followed them, and, in a jargon which resembled French rather than the dialect of their own country, solicited charity. The English servant, in some alarm, repulsed them; but Corisande, whose heart was never shut against the wretched of whatever appearance, stopped, and, bestowing her alms, spoke to the poor stranger in French. The beggar, changing his voice, answered her in the same language, and told her with great emotion, that, since she was of France, she would surely have compassion on a wretched man of that country, who lay dying.

dying a little further on, with no other shelter than the cliffs afforded him, and absolutely without the means of procuring wherewithal to moisten his parched lips, or a place wherein he could die. Shocked by such a picture, Corisande hastened to the place. She saw, extended on the ground, a poor man apparently dying. She approached and spoke to him. At the sound of her voice he lifted up his head, and, fixing his eyes earnestly on her face, uttered in a faint voice the name of Corisande ! and fell back senseless ; while, throwing herself down by him, and frantically shrieking for help, she called on Montgomeri !

The servant, amazed and terrified at what she saw, ran for assistance to the house. De Beauvilliers and his servant, bringing with them whatever of refreshment they could first find, were soon at the spot. The Count, breathless, and hardly conscious of what he did, caused the

Bill

Still apparently dying Montgomeri to be conveyed to his house. Corisande collected, in this trying moment, that presence of mind which had on so many perilous occasions befriended her. Montgomeri was not dead; there was then a possibility of saving him: and he was at length restored to his recollection, and found himself in bed—De Beauvilliers holding one of his hands, and Corisande bending earnestly over him, with a look of so much tender anguish as never could be effaced from his memory. The first use he made of the power of speech was, after trying to express what he felt towards his wife and the Count, to recommend his unhappy comrades to their care. The wants of those poor men had been already attended to, and they were taken into the house; where, in some days, the life of Montgomeri appeared to be out of hazard. But it was not till two of those days had passed that Corisande thought it

it safe to trust him with the delight of beholding his boy; and it was much longer before she ventured to ask him to relate the cause of his long absence, and of his still more extraordinary appearance under such circumstances of misery.

When at length he was so far re-established in his health as to enable him to speak of what had passed since their separation, he thus accounted for all that had occasioned her astonishment and her grief:—

“ When I left you at Mount St. Michel I passed over to Avranches, with little hope, I own, of hearing any news likely to assuage your anxiety or my own. I was there met by a confidential friend, a lieutenant in my regiment, sent in search of me by order of the King of Navarre, who wished to entrust me with the execution of a very hazardous project, of which the Marquis de Rosney\* had given the plan,

\* Afterwards the justly celebrated Duke de Sully.

and,

and in doing so, had named me as the properest person to entrust it to, on account of my knowledge of the country around Montmelian, (to possess which was his object) as well as of other qualities he was pleased to impute to me. Corisande, could I decline this duty? Certainly not. I knew that you would have enjoined its performance. I wrote to you however by a boatman, but he took no care to deliver my letter. Then, counteracting the anguish inflicted by being compelled to leave you, with the hope of success, and of our meeting to rejoice in it, I proceeded across the whole kingdom, and endeavoured to execute the orders I had received. I will not dwell on this attempt. The enemy, apprized of them by treachery, and five times our numbers, were too much for our small and ill-appointed party. I was made prisoner, and, had my real name been known, I should have suffered death. Under the fictitious name

I bore,

I bore, I was sent prisoner to Aubagne, not far from Marseilles. I will hereafter relate more fully how I effected my escape, and endeavoured to pass round by sea to the Norman coast ; but the vessel in which I embarked was taken off Monduca by a pirate, and carried to Tetuan ; where, utterly hopeless of my ransom, or of ever seeing you more, I endured a living death, till about five months ago, when the moor died whose property I was ; and his heir, desirous of removing from thence, sold his slaves for a very trifling consideration ; and I was purchased by the society of *les Freres de la Misericorde* \*, who could, however, do no more for me than give me my liberty. I obtained, however, of an Englishman who was in the port to trade, leave to work my passage to Eng-

\* The Brethren of Mercy : an association of pious persons, who subscribe and send missionaries for the redemption of Christians, slaves among the Mahometans.

land on board his ship; and with two other Frenchmen, natives of Provence, who had been captives longer than I had been, I found myself, without clothes, money, or friends, put on shore on the banks of the Thames. Our wish was to hasten to that part of the English coast opposite our own; but innumerable hardships and difficulties beset us in our journey. At last we reached, though almost starved, the borders of the sea near Dover. But by that time I was exhausted by famine and fatigue. Disappointment too added its sharpest pangs; for we solicited a passage in vain; and when, even within its view, I despaired of ever putting my feet again on my native soil — of ever reaching the country where my Corisande awaited me — woes so complicated and of so long continuance, conquered my resolution; and my disease, aggravated by the state of my mind, would in a very short time have destroyed me, had not relenting Heaven sent

sent *thee*, my guardian angel, my Corisande, to recall me from the brink of the grave."

As soon as Montgomeri had strength to undertake it, the family of De Beauvilliers returned to France. He was there reinstated in the possession of the Castle of Montrichard, and of all the property he had been deprived of; but neither his age nor infirmities prevented his entering, with all the ardour of youth, into the service of the King. Montgomeri obtained a rank in the army proportioned to his merit and his birth. Their toils were sweetened by returning, as often as those toils remitted, to the domestic scene where Corisande, so adored by both, surrounded by a lovely family, received a father and a husband, dearer for the perils to which they were too frequently exposed—till Henry, having united all parties, restored, at least for a time, tranquillity and prosperity to his people.



His faithful servants were not forgotten; and the house of Montgomeri de Beauvilliers, having partaken of the honourable adversity of the King of Navarre, was elevated to the most prosperous fortune that could be bestowed by the King of France.

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I here end my history, which I have written at many and long intervals, slowly travelling towards Paris, where I do not intend to stay longer than to receive some remittances and letters from England. I shall then, I believe, direct my course towards Germany, and you shall hear, when he has any thing worth telling you, from your friend, who, in the words of Dr. Johnson, may well describe himself as

“ A kind

“ A kind of Solitary Wanderer in  
“ the wild of life, without any direction  
“ or fixed point of view ; a gloomy  
“ gazer on the world to which I have  
“ little relation.”

May you, my friend, be happier !

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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## ERRATA. VOL. II.

- Page 13, Line 2, for *Denbigh* read *Maynard*.  
 — 103, — 22, for *abhor* read *detest*.  
 — 175, — 5, omit *himself*.  
 — 181, — 13, for *persnade* read *persuade*.  
 — 204, — 3, for *to them* read *on them*.  
 — 212, — for *fidelity* read *infidelity*.  
 — 228, — 3, for *Mrs. George Denbigh* read *Mrs. George Maynard*.  
 — 229, — 3, for *fifteen* read *seventeen*.  
 — 229, — 15, omit *the stop* and the *and* after *reluctance*.  
 — 229, — 21, for *George Denbigh* read *George Maynard*.  
 — 231, — 16, for *inconsequence* read *in consequence*.  
 — 234, — 2, for *Denbigh* read *Maynard*.  
 — 237, — 11, for *Denbigh* read *Maynard*.  
 — 238, — 10, for *perceive* read *distinguish*.  
 — 245, — 9, omit *in*.  
 — 255, — 4, for *four* read *some*.  
 — 279, — 15, for *he* read *the earth*.  
 — — 19, for *quietyet* read *quiet, yet*. ✓













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FEB 28 1952